Commentary

VOLUME EIGHTY-EIGHT • NUMBER FOUR • OCTOBER 1989

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Jean-François Revel

A False Start in the Middle East
Eugene V. Rostow

On Being a Jew
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Flag-Burning & Other Modes of Expression
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The Goldin Boys—A Story
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Perversions of the Holocaust
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What to Do About the Schools: An Exchange
Albert Shanker / Mary Hatwood Futrell / Chester E. Finn, Jr. & Others

Books in Review: Eliot A. Cohen / Allan Gerson / Ronald Radosh / Ambrose Evans-Pritchard / James Gardner / Terry Eastland

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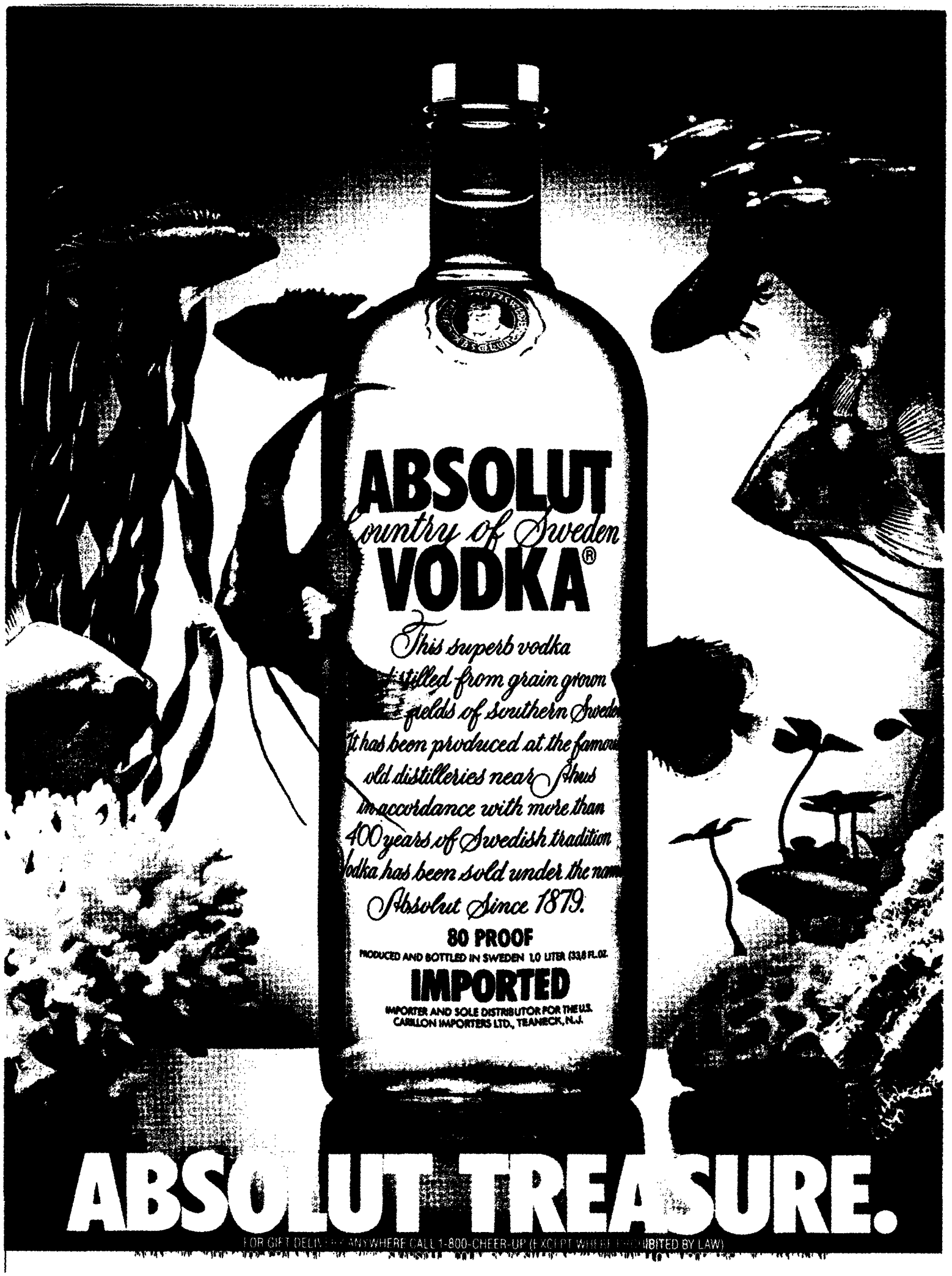
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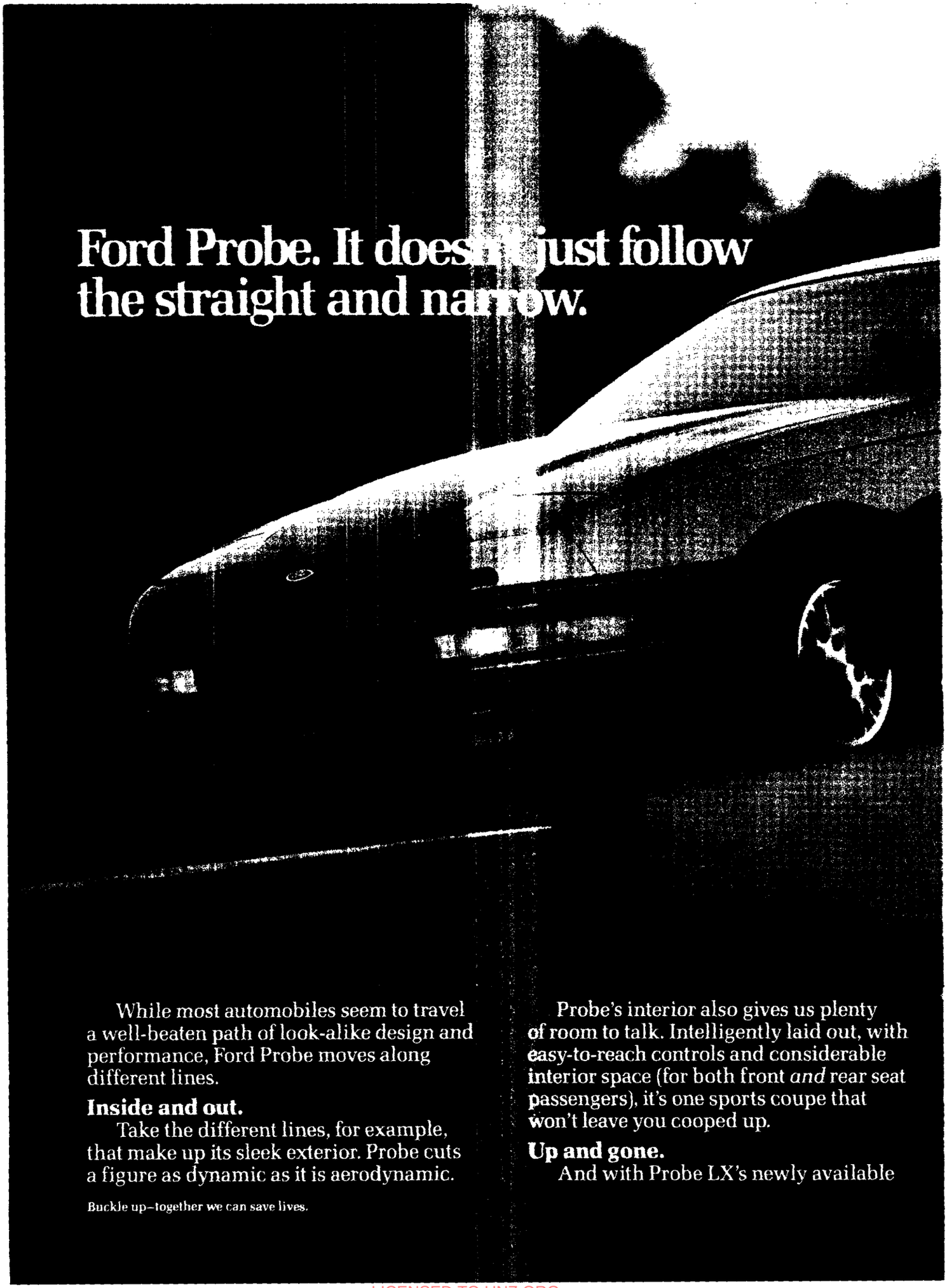

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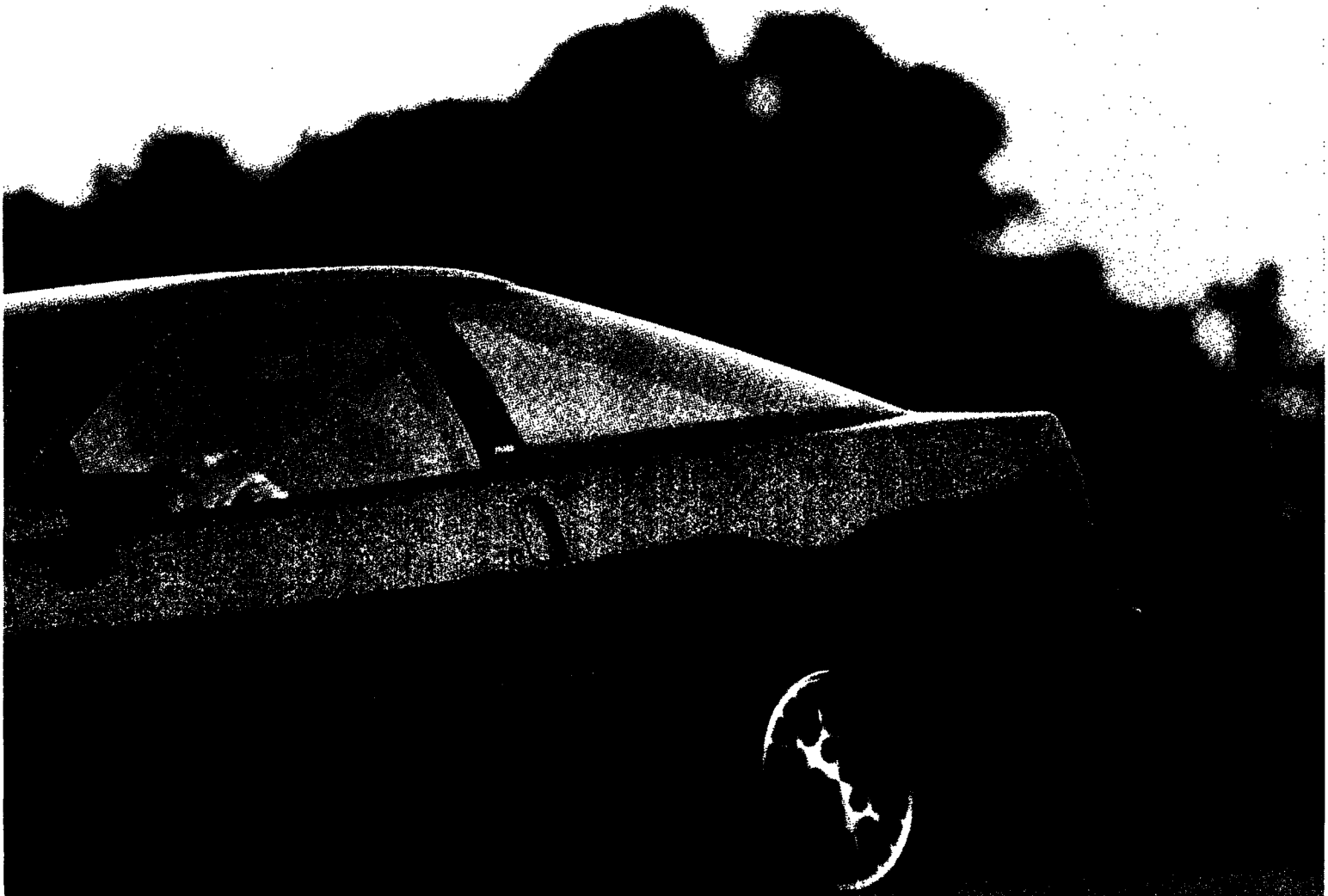

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Letters from Readers

What to Do About the Schools

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A Nation Still at Risk" [May], Chester E. Finn, Jr. correctly concludes that American schools are still in deep trouble. He wrongly suggests that the problem can be solved with just a few changes.

Mr. Finn won't get any argument from me when he says that the scores of even our best students are appallingly low or when he condemns those in the education community who belittle the need for knowledge and cultural literacy. However, if some educators have strayed too far in one direction, Mr. Finn has gone too far in the other. The "process method" doesn't lead to learning, but neither does wholesale memorization of disconnected "facts." Mr. Finn has misread and misinterpreted a number of the sources he cites. He attacks a statement from a National Academy of Science report that reads:

> Unfortunately, as children become socialized by school and society, they begin to view mathematics as a rigid system of externally dictated rules governed by standards of speed, accuracy, and memory. . . . A mathematics curriculum that emphasizes computation and rules is like a writing curriculum that emphasizes grammar and spelling: both put the cart before the horse.

According to Mr. Finn, this asks teachers to scorn "standards of accuracy, speed, and memory"! Does it? Or does it merely ask that you encourage students to speak and write *before* you make demands as to spelling and grammar—that you give students the opportunity to think in terms of number and quantitative problems *before* imposing standards of speed, accuracy, and memory? Mr. Finn leads us to think that scientists and mathematicians have betrayed their calling when the truth is that they are merely talking about how to help students reach his goal of subject-matter understanding.

Mr. Finn launches a similar diatribe against an American Association for the Advancement of Science report that advises teachers: "do not separate knowing from finding out"; "deemphasize the memorization of technical vocabulary"; "use a team approach"; "reward creativity"; "encourage a spirit of healthy questioning"; "avoid dogmatism"; etc. What's wrong with these directions to teachers? Would Mr. Finn prefer their opposites: "give them the facts but don't tell them how to find things out"; "emphasize memorization of technical vocabulary"; "insist on students working alone"; "discourage healthy questioning"; "be dogmatic"?

Mr. Finn is wrong if he thinks we will solve our educational problems by revisiting old debates of content vs. method, subject-matter-oriented vs. child-oriented. There is no evidence that the superior results obtained by the European school systems have come about by taking extreme positions on these issues. European teachers are given the same pedagogical advice that ours are. European and American students do not perform so differently just because our schools are "progressive" and theirs are "traditional" or merely because their students spend more time in school—the two differences Mr. Finn cites. The differences between the two systems are much more extensive. If we are to get some clues as to how extensive the changes are which need to be made in this country, we should look at *all* the major differences, not just Mr. Finn's chosen few.

One major difference is that all the European schools track students at a fairly early age. Students are tested (in fourth grade, in Germany) and sorted into college-bound, general, and vocational tracks; the resulting homogeneous classes can be effectively taught through the usual lecture and recitation methods. While there is some tracking in the United States, most of our classes include students of widely ranging achievement and ability. Such classes cannot be taught effectively by such methods. Should the U.S. track? Would tracking be politically acceptable? What would the effect be on class and race segregation within schools? Or if we decide not to track, what game plan do we have to find and disseminate effective methods for dealing with heterogeneous classes?

Another major difference between Europe and America is the existence of student incentives. European students work much harder

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in school because it makes a difference. If you don't take tough courses and get good grades, you don't get into college. In this country there are some colleges that will take any high-school graduate, no matter what his record. And students going directly into the workforce know that the only thing that counts is whether they graduated from high school; almost all will start at the same pay, no matter what they learned. In Europe students know that whether they will get a job, how soon, and at what salary will depend on how well they did in school. As Mr. Finn says, how much students learn depends on how much they work; and, like most people, students do the work they must to achieve what they want. What can we do to increase the pressures on students to perform? Mr. Finn hopes to induce greater student effort by raising high-school graduation standards, but, unless there are vastly different standards for different student tracks, the result will be a huge number of failures, a big increase in the dropout rate, and, very shortly, political pressure to lower standards once again. One idea would be for American business to begin inspecting high-school transcripts and hiring for the better jobs only those who did well in high school.

Mr. Finn rightly points to the importance of curriculum, but no European country has 50 states and 16,000 school governments deciding what children should learn in science and math. The European countries mostly have a national curriculum and centralized exams that give them the tools—not possessed by us—to guarantee that a common core of knowledge will be shared by everyone in the country. Ironically, Mr. Finn criticizes the very efforts of the math and science community to move toward a voluntary national curriculum because he quibbles with some of their emphases. What is *his* strategy to get good curriculum developed and adopted throughout the country?

Tests and examinations are another major difference. Tests drive what schools do. European schools spend time teaching students to write essays for difficult essay exams. U.S. schools devote time to helping students pass multiple-choice exams. Americans test frequently and insist on "objective" tests; Europeans test much less frequently with lengthy essay exams. We test almost exclusively on reading and math; Europeans also test on science, foreign languages, and writing—thus forcing teachers and students to give these subjects high priority.

Another difference is how schools are governed. The Europeans have no governance body comparable to our school boards. Their teachers have much greater autonomy to operate as they believe is necessary to improve learning. One likely result is that European schools are more able to attract and retain professional-caliber teachers. Also, European principals and superintendents, unconsumed by the political demands of constantly pleasing a changing school-board majority, are much more likely than ours are to be expert teachers—and thus truly the instructional leaders that in other writings Mr. Finn is so eager for. What are his ideas for reconciling democratic, local control of education with the need for insulating practitioners from political pressures and destructive micromanagement?

European schools devote a much higher proportion of their educa-

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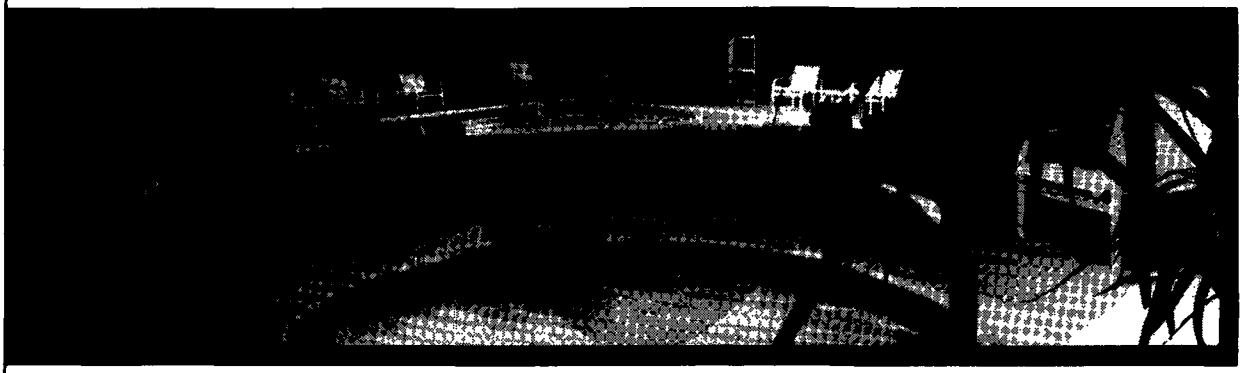

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tion dollar to areas that directly support the classroom, such as supplies and lower student-adult ratios (which in turn permit smaller class sizes in seminars, writing classes, and science labs). I know Mr. Finn does not support these bloated administrative staffs; he attacked them when he was Assistant Secretary of Education. But what is his strategy for cutting them down to size?

Finally, we need to consider the difference in teacher standards. Because college-entry standards in Europe are so stiff and ours are so lax, the 15 to 27 percent (depending on the country) of European students who are even *admitted* to college—and from whom all their teachers are recruited—are academically equivalent to the top 5 percent of our college graduates. How many of our top 5 percent go into teaching? Almost none. In Europe there is no such thing as an elementary-school teacher who is not well-versed in science and math; in the U.S. a large proportion of our teachers are not well-equipped to teach in these areas. If, for example, we are going to admonish elementary schools to teach more science, we need to consider who will teach the courses. Perhaps there is one really good science teacher in the school who can teach all the science classes, or perhaps this one teacher can mentor his colleagues and bring them up to speed. The answer to this problem lies in reorganizing the school to take into account the talent available—and likely to be available—to different schools. It does not lie simply in legislating higher standards and increased time on task.

Clearly, there are many differences between European schools and our own. Can we really copy them? Should we? Or do we have to come up with our own set of fundamental changes that takes into account our common-school tradition, our tradition of local school control, and our supply of well-educated teachers? This is what the "second reform movement" is grappling with.

In discussing the need for massive education change, Jack Bowsher, the former director of education for IBM, has said that if he were responsible for a computer-production process in which 30 percent of the computers fell off the production line before reaching the end and 90 percent of those that made it to the end frequently did not work, the last thing he would call for is to run the line another hour a day or another month a year. Mr. Finn should take heed.

His proposed solution of more hours in more difficult classes would make sense if our schools were effectively educating 90 or 80 or even 70 percent of our students and we just needed to reach the next 10 or 20 percent. But the NAEP scores he cites show that less than 10 percent of our students are emerging successfully from our system. The problems of education are huge. Mr. Finn's ideological incantations are an enormously inadequate response.

ALBERT SHANKER
President, American Federation
of Teachers
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article, "A Nation Still at Risk," by Chester E. Finn, Jr. raises some important points that I believe merit further consideration.

One is the issue of education spending and the tiresome "money isn't everything" lecture. Of course it isn't, but money can buy some very important things, like smaller class sizes where teachers have the opportunity to individualize instruction and safer school buildings that support learning.

The condition of school buildings across the country deserves more attention. Too many of us assume that schools are safe for students and teachers, but in too many communities that simply is not the case. To put it bluntly, the infrastructure of our public schools is a shambles. A recent survey put out by the Education Writers of America states that only 42 percent of our schools are in good condition. Can Americans really condone sending 58 percent of our students to schools plagued by leaking roofs, crumbling plaster, rodent and insect infestation, and faulty plumbing and electrical systems?

Another item that Mr. Finn ignores is the value—and necessity—of targeting funds to federal education programs such as Chapter I and Head Start that have proved to be successful. I frankly do not understand Mr. Finn's opposition to assisting disadvantaged students. The number of children living in poverty is rising dramatically, and we cannot afford—morally or economically—to ignore their special learning needs. If these students had trouble meeting academic standards before, is it realistic to assume they can now meet new, higher standards and tougher graduation requirements without some assistance? Of course not. It's like asking an athlete who can't clear a two-foot hurdle to jump three feet—without providing any extra coaching or support. If we do not give disadvantaged students extra services now, they will spend a lifetime trying to catch up. And too many of them will not succeed. Chapter I and Head Start programs pave the way for students' future success in school.

And finally, I take exception to another of Mr. Finn's points, the issue of teacher involvement in decision-making. For too long policy-makers, many of whom have not set foot in a classroom since their school days, have treated teachers as if they were very tall children. They have taken charge of nearly all decisions about how we will educate our children, ranging from the structure of the school day to the structure of the curriculum. Top-down decision-making may save time, but that's about all it has going for it. That approach has not worked. If it had been successful, we would not still be having this national debate about whether our nation is still at risk.

It's time we did a better job of linking classroom teachers with education researchers at our nation's colleges and universities so that school faculties can put the growing body of effective research to practical use. And it's time to express confidence in and support for the people who are working with students every day, America's classroom teachers.

MARY HATWOOD FUTRELL
Past President, National
Education Association
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I believe that Chester E. Finn, Jr. is one of the more thoughtful observers of elementary and secondary education in the United States today. Mr. Finn's notions on school choice and vouchers are at odds with our own views, but we very much support his thrust toward standards and excellence for American secondary schools. The problem, of course, involves current cultural values in America as much as educational values. For example, many parents simply will not support homework assignments at

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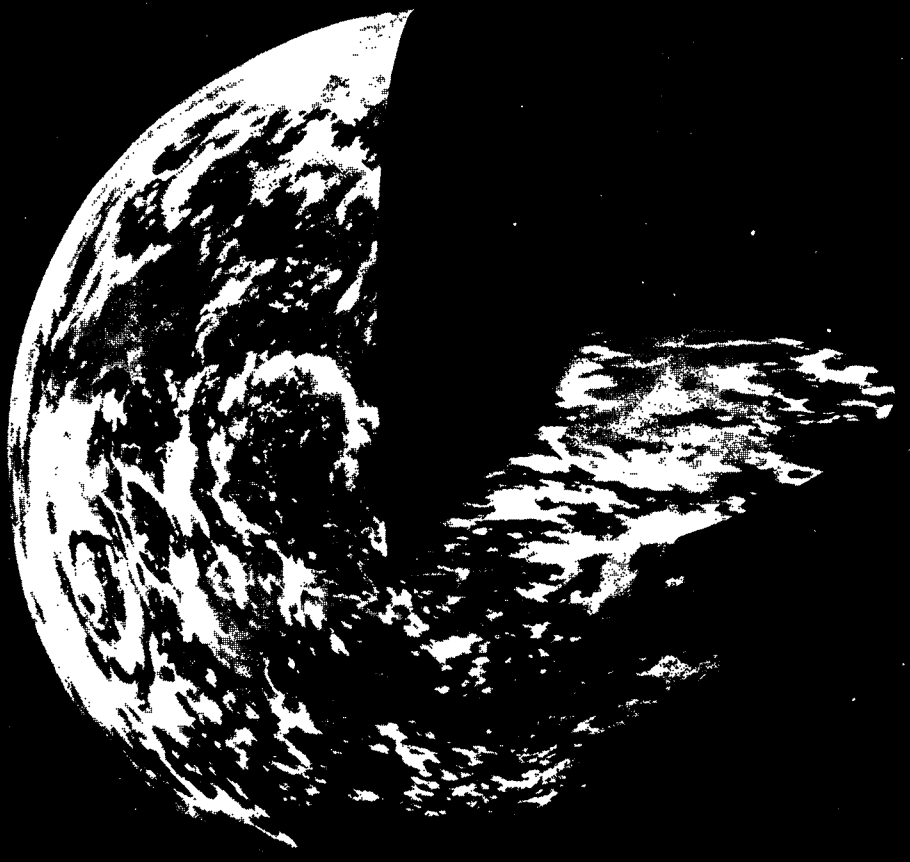

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levels comparable to those given in Western Europe and Japan, and we seem to have some kind of addiction to consumer goods that dictates that the typical high-school senior work twenty hours or more a week.

We are always pleased when an influential periodical carries thoughtful articles on education, and we salute COMMENTARY in this regard.

SCOTT D. THOMSON
Executive Director, National
Association of Secondary
School Principals
Reston, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What a pleasure to see Chester E. Finn, Jr. back in the pages of COMMENTARY, translating the world of education into reasonable language and ideas which lay people can understand. Having just completed a three-year term on the California State Board of Education, but not being a professional educator, I know at first hand the frustration of having to learn the language and current ideology before being able to grasp the problem. The solution to the problem, any problem, flows from its definition . . . and is therefore inexorably tied up in whatever educational fad the definer of the problem happens to be following at the time.

All of which means that I completely agree with Mr. Finn that denial is widespread, not just on the part of parents . . . but much more seriously . . . among professional educators who recognize that a neighboring district, or a neighboring state, may not be educating its students adequately, but firmly believe that, given the existing circumstances, their own district or state is doing a good job. The key phrase, of course, is "given the existing circumstances." Those circumstances may be high transiency rates of students, extreme poverty, large class size, etc., but they are being used as excuses for poorly educating our students.

One of the major frustrations of being a policy-maker in education is not knowing whom and what to believe. Education research appears unable to answer fundamental questions such as "does pre-school give the disadvantaged child an advantage?," "how much phonics is enough?," and, most fundamentally, "what do we need to teach our children?" The process vs. content argument has been around since John Dewey's day and is still cyclically reengaged in by the professionals. But in my experience most board members, both at the local and state levels, are not even aware of this argument and are therefore not engaged in it. Too many peripheral issues dominate board agendas.

In California, the recently published *History/Social Science Framework* definitely calls for new textbooks heavy in content. If those books are produced, and if the teachers in California teach the new curriculum, in twelve years our high-school graduates will know in what half-century the Civil War occurred. On the other hand, the California frameworks being developed in math and science are probably more process-oriented than Mr. Finn would like. In watching the science framework being developed, I saw a sincere effort to get away from the mere listing of facts in favor of teaching students to understand the facts within a context of larger scientific concepts. Thus, the best of both worlds. As of now, the document is still incomplete and we will have to wait for the results.

If Mr. Finn and other educational researchers could keep us on a path long enough to test its success or failure, then we policy-makers would know better what to do. As political bodies do, we drift.

PERRY DYKE
Redlands, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I have come to expect thoughtful and well-written articles from Chester E. Finn, Jr., and "A Nation at Risk" does not disappoint. There is, however, one matter which might buttress Mr. Finn's contention that time on a task tends to translate into increased learning of that task, a point that is virtually axiomatic.

In my visits to high schools across the country, I have discovered that schools are a dumping ground for every social ill the rest of society cannot solve. As a consequence, highway fatalities have resulted in driver-education programs; illegitimate children have been the catalyst for sex education; drug abuse has led to drug-education programs. The school now provides global-awareness education, nuclear education, ethnic and racial history, and every conceivable theme the well-wrought imagination of educators can devise.

I have been to schools where "apartheid" is the focus of attention for a full school week and yet only one in ten students is capable of spelling the word and explaining the concept. Is it any wonder that American students do so poorly on international exams? Several years ago the superintendent of the Dallas public schools was asked why American students did not perform as well as their Korean, Japanese, and West European counterparts on standardized tests. His comment—I believe—captured the ethos of our high schools. He said, "The tests don't include cheerleading."

HERBERT LONDON
Dean, Gallatin Division
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Chester E. Finn, Jr. rightly points out that the bankruptcy of this nation's educational institutions reveals that we are still "a nation at risk." And the reason for this intellectual and moral bankruptcy is the lack of order, civility, and morality in the schools.

For example, during a two-week period in Chicago's public schools, three students were shot, two were stabbed, and one teacher was raped. It is an alarming fact that, as a 1988 U.S. government report revealed, crime, disorder, violence, vandalism, gang warfare, drug dealing, and allegations of sexual abuse seem to permeate this nation's public schools.

This 1988 report buttressed a 1984 study . . . which found that, "For many teachers, schools have become hazardous places to teach and definitely places to fear. Self-preservation rather than instruction has become their prime concern."

Across the United States, in a typical month, some 5,200 public-school teachers are physically assaulted, and 1,000 require medical attention. In big-city public schools, 7 percent of high-school students and 8 percent of junior-high-school students have reportedly said that they sometimes stay home from school out of fear for their safety. Indeed, a recent study by the National Association of Secondary School Principals revealed that students in middle schools listed violence, crime, and disorder as their primary concerns.

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Certainly a nexus exists between the lack of moral education and the current crime, violence, and disorder. . . . If our schools are to achieve true progress—that is, moral and spiritual as well as intellectual progress—our families, churches, and schools, as well as the business community and social organizations, . . . must emphasize once again the teaching and learning of good manners and good morals. . . .

HAVEN BRADFORD GOW
Arlington Heights, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As one who has been teaching at a suburban high school for twenty-one years, who has read too many articles and books about education and attended too many conferences, workshops, and curriculum sessions, . . . I would like to offer some personal observations which may complement Chester E. Finn, Jr.'s article.

I have found that teachers are becoming more interested in their retirement than they are in their salary schedules. Of course they still want more money, benefits, and free time, just like all other working people, but their major objective these days is to leave teaching while they still have their wits about them.

One reason for this is that teaching in most public schools has become a very difficult job. Forget about the burdens of paperwork—the real problem is Rodney Dangerfield's complaint about "no respect." This lack of respect is different from what I encountered when I first started teaching: in those days, the teacher was considered a second-class professional with an indolent streak—he was assumed to be either a dumb jock, or else effeminate. But those attitudes (which still persist, I'm sure) never seriously interfered with a teacher's ability to do his job. Today, however, lack of respect for the teacher is a part of the students' cultural milieu and is increasingly shared by their parents. Teachers are the victims of the general lack of deference and civility, and their subject matter is a casualty of the general cultural climate of soap operas, inane sit-coms, and, of course, that music!

Another factor that undermines respect for the teacher's place in the lives of students is the obsessive legalism which makes it impossible to expel disruptive and dangerous students, or that requires scarce resources to be expended on students who will never pass. Is it surprising, then, given all this, that teachers are eager to retire?

Most teachers know what high standards are and they want schools to maintain those standards with tough discipline. Unfortunately, they often fail to see any link between the public-policy positions of their leaders and current educational policies which subvert their own position and their own views on education.

In general, local unions are more helpful than the national and state organizations which never directly communicate their political agenda or solicit the opinions of the membership—they just take our money. Most local unions will listen and respond to teachers' problems, many of which pertain to an improved educational environment. They frequently serve as a protection against administrators (and school committees) who may actually be counterproductive to education and who, out of motives I can never understand, frequently harass teachers. . . .

When I first began to teach, I thought my way was the only one, but experience has shown me that different styles and techniques can be successful. . . . A teacher must be committed to his subject, must believe that it has inherent value and interest, and must convey his own seriousness of purpose to his students within an orderly and disciplined school environment. If these are achieved within a supportive community, results will take care of themselves, and we will finally achieve the type of education desired by Mr. Finn and hundreds of thousands of teachers.

PAUL ZISSERSON
Cranston, Rhode Island

CHESTER E. FINN, JR. writes:

Albert Shanker is not only head of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), he is also one of the authentically insightful and imaginative figures in American education, casting a much larger shadow than anybody else in what is commonly dubbed the "education establishment." He is a terrific ally and a formidable foe. He is also sometimes wrong. For the past several years he has been clear-eyed about the woeful performance of American youngsters (even while many educators have been murmuring excuses and denials) and about what well-educated citizens should know and be able to do. But he has been off-base in his analysis of *why* we are doing so poorly now and of what we ought to do differently. The "second reform movement," of which he is perhaps the foremost advocate, has about it an air of the naive and the romantic, as if "empowering" teachers, "restructuring" schools, and "decentralizing" authority would *per se* yield higher student achievement. They may; they may not. That is why the experiments under way in several cities are worth seeing through, and why Mr. Shanker's union is to be commended for the fact that several of its locals are prominently involved in these endeavors. But other AFT locals are simultaneously going on strike, battling reforms, and defending the status quo as if everything were hunky-dory. Observe the union's shameful behavior in Chelsea, Massachusetts, a derelict urban school system that the AFT managed to ignore (save for organizing its teachers) for decades—only to erupt in fury when Chelsea's town fathers asked Boston University to try running the schools for them. This is as much a part of Mr. Shanker's union as the innovations in Rochester and Miami. And there is every reason to suppose that conferring more decisions on teachers would yield equally mixed results.

I cannot for the life of me figure out why Mr. Shanker goes on at such length about education in Europe. My article barely mentioned that continent and never suggested that we mimic its educational arrangements, save for the straightforward point that youngsters in most industrialized countries (European and Asian alike) spend much more of their time engaged in formal education than ours do.

Mary Hatwood Futrell, the immediate past president of the National Education Association, wishes I had paid attention to the condition of school buildings and federal spending levels. I wish the leaders of the nation's largest teachers' union paid attention to education.

Nor can I fathom how she read into my silence about such programs as Head Start any "opposition to assisting disadvantaged students." But, as I tried to make clear in my article, we do have a large national problem with advanced reading skills.

Scott D. Thomson is a wise and effective educator, but he, too,

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along with Albert Shanker and Mary Futrell, read something that I did not write. I made passing—and favorable—reference to the idea of school choice, but I made no mention of "vouchers." It is possible, as four states are now demonstrating, to have a great deal of choice within public education and never get near a voucher. As for the gaps in our "current cultural values," Mr. Thomson is surely correct. But as he well knows (though many other educators seem not to), these must not be allowed to become an excuse for the schools' failing to do their part.

Perry Dyke's friendly letter tasks education researchers with more than they can be counted upon to deliver: supplying the necessary consensus about vexing policy issues. To be sure, certain research findings are reasonably good guides to practice—see, for example, the 59 conclusions and recommendations contained in *What Works*, a distillation published by the Department of Education in response to then-Education Secretary William J. Bennett's insistence that all that research must have yielded some sort of reliable and helpful results.

But when we turn to such matters as "what do we need to teach our children," which Mr. Dyke correctly notes is the most fundamental of all, while research can certainly furnish clues and cautions, it isn't the analysts or, it seems to me, the education profession writ large that should be making the essential decisions. That is why we have policy-makers; if they are too busy with "peripheral issues," they may need to reorder their own priorities.

To Herbert London, Haven Bradford Gow, and Paul Zisserson, my heartfelt thanks for documenting, extending, and supplementing my own understanding of what has gone wrong and what needs doing.

The Rushdie Affair

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "The Ayatollah, the Novelist, and the West" [June], Daniel Pipes, writing from an American point of view, notes the threat to our values from the militant fundamentalists of Islam and says only that our response depends more on us than on them. Quite. In the United Kingdom, where a libertarian tradition of tolerance has imposed amazing restraint in this

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matter—the accusation of "racism" is something politicians will do almost anything to avoid—the response has been violence from the Muslim community, public fear, and a determination by the authorities to be virtuous about all this.

But except for a ridiculous public performance by Harold Pinter, there has been relatively little of the pompous and absurd literary playacting in the American style described by Midge Decter in "The Rushdiad," also in the June COMMENTARY. The British situation has a practical seriousness which brushes such gestures aside. Large sections of important cities —Birmingham, London, and above all Bradford in the north of England—are populated by Muslims from the Indian subcontinent, many of whom are militant fundamentalists. They have responded to British restraint with book-burning, rioting, and flagrant violation of the law which forbids incitement to murder, calling for the killing of Rushdie and stating their readiness to carry out his "execution" themselves. "Moderate" Muslim spokesmen and leaders have made no real effort to control their bigots. On the contrary, they have inflamed them by blaming their excesses on Rushdie, on British intolerance, and on the publishers of the "offensive" book. . . .

In mid-summer, a fire-bombing campaign began in British bookstores. A number of public figures, notably the Asian Labor MP Keith Vaz, have championed Muslim demands for the extension of Britain's antiquated blasphemy law to "protect" Islam. Important Muslim political blocs in Yorkshire, the large Midlands city of Birmingham, and London have threatened electoral sanctions against local members of Parliament, including the deputy head of the Labor party (Muslims vote almost exclusively Labor), if Labor disowns Vaz. . . .

British willingness to abet illiberal Muslim bigotry has extended even to Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovits, who in a letter published in the *Times* of London (March 4, 1989) called for censorship of material which abused freedom of speech by "offending the genuine faith of many millions of devout believers." Rabbi Jakobovits included Khomeini in his condemnation of such abuse, but he also placed Salman Rushdie's book in virtually the same category as the Ayatollah's open call to murder an author for apostasy. . . .

If Chief Rabbi Jakobovits's call for less tolerance were isolated, it would not matter much. But it has been heard from many quarters in Britain; its background is the reluctance of British authorities to respond to statements like that of Dr. Kalim Siddiqui of the Muslim Institute on June 7: "I still believe absolutely that the Imam's [i.e., Khomeini's] ruling was quite correct. But if Salman Rushdie withdraws the book, then the British Muslim community will leave him alone." One commentator in the *Sunday Times* remarked that no one, including the police, had asked Dr. Siddiqui what *not* "leaving him alone" means. The same article pointed out that the Crown Prosecution Service had turned a Nelsonian (blind) eye to public incitement to murder a British citizen. . . . And yet the British, politicians and law-enforcement authorities alike, remain determined to pursue a course of tolerant goodness. *Fiat caritas,* and if it will make us look saintly, let our own forces—that means here not just the tradition of free speech, but the law itself—be destroyed.

Such passivity is strong in the West, and more so today in America than anywhere else, because such threats as we face are seen as purely notional, to be neutralized by notional means. This conviction lies close to the roots of the left-wing liberal tradition. It has, for another instance, resounded through American and European demands for Israeli restraint in the face of PLO violence, and in the willingness to take the PLO at its European-language word, ignoring its Arabic statements of lethal intent against Israel.

As the postwar threat to the West is fading in the memory of the young, making "cold war" into a term of abuse, our very willingness not only to support our allies but to defend ourselves is being submerged in a wash of public-relations enthusiasm for "peace," as though the conflicts of a half-century and the enormous abyss between our world and that of a rabidly militant bigotry can be made to vanish by a display of friendly gestures and good intentions, and by ignoring the lethal intent of those who hate us.

HERB GREER
Manchester, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Both Daniel Pipes and Midge Decter accurately portray different aspects of the Salman Rushdie affair. Miss Decter, with her usual insightfulness, forcefully analyzes and describes the feckless and self-serving behavior of the literati. Yet there were at least two other aspects of the affair which were not discussed, and which disclose a great deal about the current state of Western civilization.

The first of these is the weak response of the Western nations to the Khomeini threat. Within months, the diplomats who had been noisily recalled from their posts were quietly reinstated. In this respect the Rushdie affair calls to mind the behavior of the Western nations during the so-called oil crisis of the mid-1970's, when there seemed to be a despicable competition as to which country could genuflect more often and more deeply at the altar of the PLO and the Saudis. . . . The failure of the West to respond to Khomeini's death threat by specific counter-threats involving the destruction of Iranian military bases or population centers . . . makes the Khomeinis of this world successful at mocking Western values and revealing their shallowness.

The second aspect of this affair . . . is the continuing and frightening role of irrational, fundamentalist belief systems in society. By failing to confront such absurdities, the Western nations are undermining their own religious heritage and their own commitment to rational thought and are thereby giving credence to fundamentalist extremism as a valid way of life. . . .

SHELDON F. GOTTLIEB
Mobile, Alabama

DANIEL PIPES writes:

Sheldon F. Gottlieb writes that I left out of my account the lame response of the Western states, but I did devote considerable space to this topic (pp. 13-15). Still, his letter provides an opportunity to update the story since late March, when the European Community authorized the return of chiefs of mission to Teheran. Within a month, all but the British, French, and West German diplomats had returned to Teheran. The latter two were back in place in June, just after Khomeini's death. Their Canadian counterpart, who had also been withdrawn, returned along

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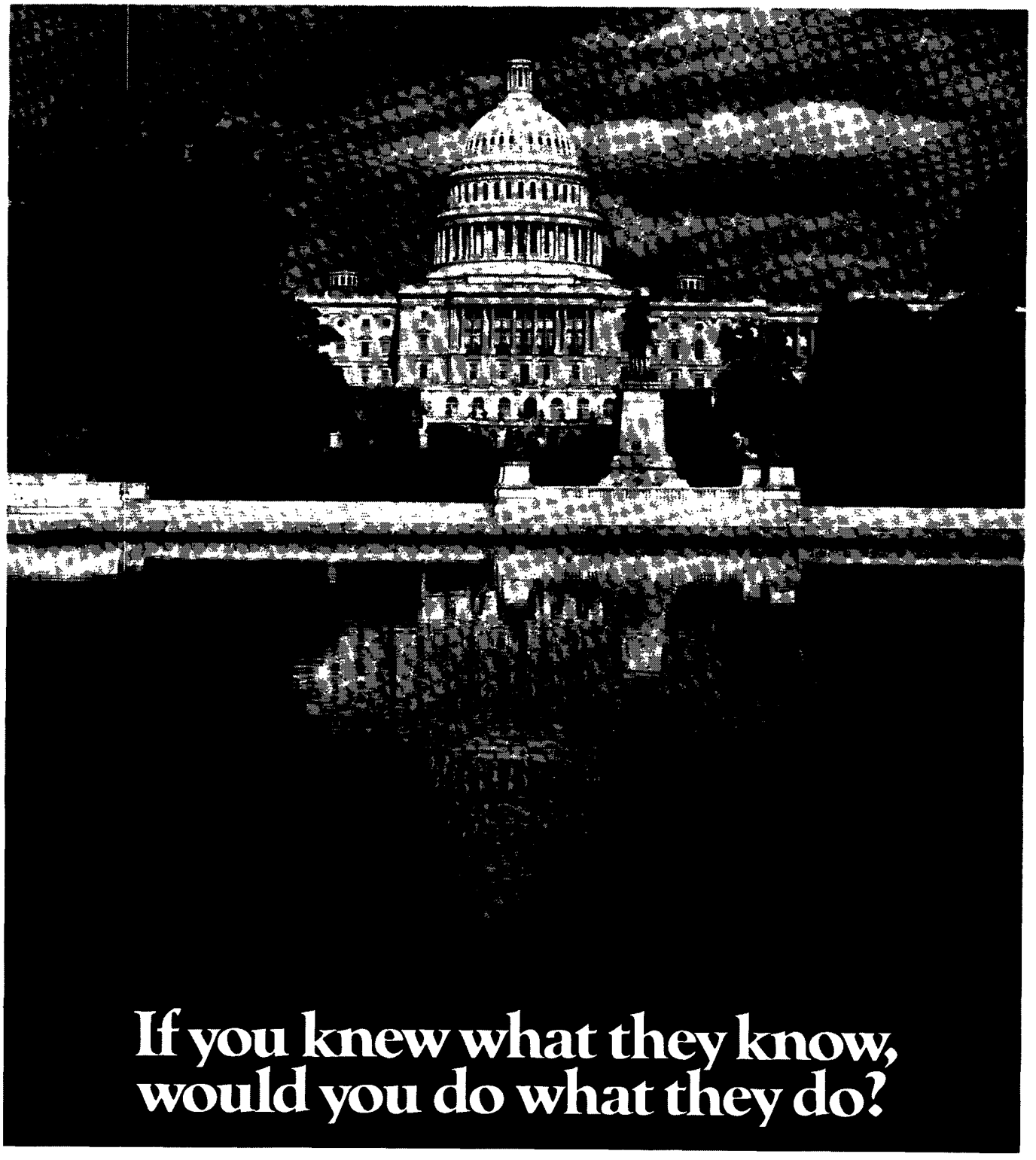

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with the majority of the EC representatives. By summer, only the British ambassador remained absent. One almost wonders why they bothered with the whole diplomatic brouhaha in the first place.

The French Revolution

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article, "Demystifying the French Revolution" [July], David Gress misrepresents a central theme of Simon Schama's *Citizens* by implying that Schama supports the thesis of a premeditatedly anti-capitalist French Revolution. On the contrary, Schama devotes considerable effort to showing that the high aristocrats who dominated the early, decisive phase of the Revolution—as well as their counterparts in the royal administration—were committed market capitalists whose vision of deregulation, free trade, and a strong national defense bore an eerie resemblance to that of many modern supply-siders. It was this commitment that led men like the noble ancestor of Republican politician Pierre "Pete" DuPont to welcome the abolition of vestigial feudal privileges—privileges that their own financial position not coincidentally made it easy to sacrifice, given the prospect of reaping enormous profits through economic rationalization and modernization.

Not until the height of the Terror and under the impact of war did the surviving revolutionaries' doctrinaire capitalism (shared even by Robespierre) give way to the anti-modernist agrarian populism of the lower classes—a populism which, by the way, Schama presents as pervasive and not limited to some politically exploitable urban underclass, as Mr. Gress seems to suggest. He would no doubt like to enlist Simon Schama as a latter-day neoconservative, but in fact Schama is more than a little ironic on the subject of Reaganomics, Reagan defense budgets, and the like. He even compares the wildly expensive, abortive, and ultimately ruinous French naval and port defense build-up of the 1780's to the Strategic Defense Initiative.

The French scenario described so vividly by Schama evokes less the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power than the modernizing excesses of the Shah (and its revolutionary sequel) or the top-down enlightenment now heralded by Mikhail Gorbachev. . . . Although Mr. Gress, writing from the present, has reason to contrast the imperatives of "linear capitalism" on the one hand and centralized "areal" statism on the other, Schama indicates that, at least at the beginning, they worked hand in glove. The eradication of protective, intermediary institutions was blessed by those who most aspired to a liberal capitalist order.

Schama's view is thus profoundly tragic but scarcely compatible with the economic libertarianism endorsed by most American conservatives. History suggests that the public, not only of France, Russia, or Iran but even in these United States, will often prefer regressive or uneconomical legislation which is nevertheless perceived as morally and politically "just," to full freedom to succeed or fail. Is that not, after all, behind much of the clamor for a "kinder, gentler nation"? Paternalism has its uses if not its virtues. Schama's enthralling tale reminds us that, in their own enthusiasm for a future which works, messianic capitalists ignore this at their peril.

SETH A. HALPERN
Scarsdale, New York

DAVID GRESS writes:

Seth A. Halpern is in error if he thinks that I would "like to enlist Simon Schama as a latter-day neoconservative." Schama is too good a historian to reveal his politics in his work, but judging from other public statements of his, I conclude that he is best described as an anti-totalitarian, that is, a supporter and defender of constitutional democracy. He has stated that any historian interested in the large events and movements of history must put the problem of political violence at the center of his concerns. As Mr. Halpern well knows, liberals used to be quite good at unmasking the real interests behind many kinds of political violence; since the Vietnam war, however, they have become singularly inept at this, to put it mildly. Yet liberalism in defense of democratic civil and international order remains at least a theoretical, if not a practical, possibility, and I would hope that it is not necessary to denounce Schama's criticism of violence, and my defense of it, as *ipso facto* conservative.

Mr. Halpern also seems to have misunderstood what I said about the French Revolution and anti-capitalism. In my article, I de-

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scribed and criticized the formerly prevailing Marxist view of the Revolution—that it marked the rise of capitalism in France—and introduced some of the exciting and interesting work that has given us what is arguably a truer and more realistic picture of the Revolution. Schama's book is only one example of that work, albeit the most spectacular and in many ways the most impressive. Other historians, like Alfred Cobban, George Taylor, and more recently, William Doyle, have pointed out that while it is true that some revolutionary leaders were liberals (in Adam Smith's sense), nevertheless the net effect of the Revolution was to ruin trade and commercial prosperity, transfer resources and political power to protectionist landowners, and instill in French political culture a fear of unregulated markets and commerce that did not begin to disappear until the 1960's.

Finally, I plead not guilty to Mr. Halpern's implied charge that I am an economic libertarian because I criticize present-day demagogues whose calls for justice and equity merely disguise their will to power. On the contrary, I see no contradiction in rejecting both libertarianism *and* the specious calls for justice that are in reality demands for power to special interests—demands whose net effect is to reduce everybody's opportunities and well-being. It is precisely those who claim to want a "kinder, gentler nation" who should be the first to reject false claims on behalf of justice.

Israel's Future

To the Editor of Commentary:

I recently read Norman Podhoretz's brilliant and incisive article, "Israel: A Lamentation From the Future" [March], as well as the letters in response to it [July]. I agree fully with Mr. Podhoretz about refraining from advocacy of solutions to Israel's security needs unless one is a citizen of the country and one's own life is on the line. I further agree with him about the dangers of a PLO state. Nevertheless, I would like to offer a proposal for the Middle East which, so far as I know, has never been aired before, though some of its provisions have been included in other proposals. I hope this does not smack of high hubris—I believe that all possible solutions should be considered.

There is little doubt in my mind that at some point, deplorable though it may be, Israel will be pressured into granting the Palestinians some geographically viable region. . . . I believe, therefore, that Israel should take the initiative and agree to grant the Palestinians their own territory, modified for security reasons, in the region of the West Bank and Gaza. The arrangement could be either a confederation with Israel and Jordan (if this is still possible) or else an independent autonomous region, canton, or (as a last resort) a Palestinian state. Needless to say, this calls upon the Israelis to make a monumental compromise and a gut-wrenching leap of faith. Yet if one takes the Palestinians at their word, such an arrangement would answer their major grievance.

This new region would necessarily be a demilitarized area, presenting no threat to Israeli security, and would remain so for a stipulated period—let us say fifty years or more (precedents for this exist)—allowing time for hatreds to cool, mutual confidence to build, economies to grow, and allowing also for each side to evolve its own ultimate political intention—whether for peace or for confrontation.

Aside from the prohibition against a military force, all other security functions of a non-military nature—e.g., a local police force, etc.—would be permitted in this territory. Israeli settlers living there would remain, but they would be subject to laws of the region. This too would be a difficult compromise for Israel, but it would be mandatory that no movement of population could take place except by choice.

Most critically, as soon as the new region were established, every Israeli Arab would automatically switch passports and acquire Palestinian papers, thus acknowledging what we have learned in the past year and a half. If nothing else, the intensity of the *intifada* and the strong support it has elicited from Israeli Arabs have clearly demonstrated that their loyalty is to the Palestinians and their struggle, and not to the Jewish need for a secure national home. Despite the change in citizenship, the Arabs living in Israel would, of course, go on living there in their ancestral homes, conducting business as before and being accorded full civil liberties, except that they would now be voting in their own Palestinian popular assembly rather than in the Knesset.

For Israel, such an arrangement would finally remove the demographic threat represented by the Arab population. For Arabs living in Israel, it would mean the achievement of a popular assembly that would heed their voices and attend to their grievances—as well as plan their future—thereby helping to bring the Israeli-Palestinian relationship to a new level, a more formal, diplomatic one.

Just as Israel would be expected to maintain the economic upkeep of the settlements, so this new "region" would similarly be expected to contribute to the financial support of Arab neighborhoods within Israel. Finally, as for Jerusalem, it is not in my opinion a negotiable issue. Israeli sovereignty would prevail. . . .

It seems to me that the plan I have outlined would give each side a chance to fulfill its stated goals and long-held dreams and, further, would allow each side to live in some measure of day-to-day harmony. . . .

Every peace proposal that has been offered to date has met with

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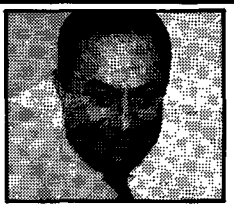

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some objection or other, and mine, if it ever got that far, would undoubtedly meet the same fate. Yet it does seem to meet the essential demands of . . . those concerned and could be a basis for further discussion. It contains a built-in symmetry that will not, unfortunately, dissolve mutual suspicion and hatred (only time will do that), but will at least keep these feelings in check. It allows for an exchange of papers rather than an exchange of people, whether Arabs or Israelis, something that no one wishes to see. Finally, it allows roles to be defined unambiguously for the first time. This kind of clarity should bring about a decrease in opportunities for violence and better assure a good existence for all.

BENJAMIN FASS
Los Angeles, California

Drugs and Youth

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Adelson's "Drugs and Youth" [May] convincingly exposes the presuppositions underlying most of the drug-education and "family-health" programs in our schools. I only wish that he had taken it one step farther to show that the academy's selective endorsement of "experimentation" and "immediate gratification," if unchecked, will destroy the ethical foundation of our society.

J. ROBERT BRAME, III
Richmond, Virginia

The Unborn

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Clifford Grobstein's *Science and the Unborn: Choosing Human Futures* [Books in Review, May] Richard John Neuhaus summarizes Grobstein as follows: "The status (as opposed to the humanness) of the unborn is *not* something that is 'there,' which we are then obliged to respect and protect. Rather, the moral status of the unborn—and, it turns out, of others already born—is both created and maintained by *our* assignment." Pastor Neuhaus faults this position for its "circularity" and doubts that it will "build a consensus" acceptable to the "overall public ethos."

Pastor Neuhaus's criticisms, although valid, do not address the central issue. Let us suppose that the status and, consequently, the rights of the individual are not (in the language of the Declaration of Independence) "unalienable," but rather exist only by concession and at the sufferance of others, as Grobstein would have it. This constitutes the destruction of any possibility of human rights, of rights due to the individual in virtue of his being human. By this criterion there exists no principled reason why one human being need ever respect another. In practice, a person will respect only those who are in a position to do him harm. He will respect only those who are equal or superior to him in strength and will ignore those who are weaker, which in our time means the unborn. It follows that society is simply the arbitrary rule of the strong over the weak for the exclusive benefit of the former, an arrangement which generations wiser than ours would recognize as a kind of tyranny.

We can avoid this tyranny only through a ringing affirmation of the principle that in virtue of the common humanity of the strong and the weak, reason dictates not that we "assign" status to anyone but that we recognize and acknowledge the status that is there.

Pastor Neuhaus considers Grobstein's argument "an advance over earlier pro-choice advocacy." On the contrary, Grobstein's position is a retreat from the moral principle that the strong have responsibilities to the weak. Indeed, his position is virtually identical to one that Socrates and Euthyphro argued about millennia ago, which inclines one to doubt that much moral progress has been made since.

Pace Grobstein, the problem is not "the question of the rational criteria by which we will or will not assign status to a human life," for such a decision can never be ours to make. The problem is what means we shall employ to afford protection for the rights of all human beings, regardless of their present dignity and status under the law.

DAVID E. BOMAR
Tarzana, California

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS writes:

David E. Bomar and I have no argument. I agree thoroughly with his rephrasing of my contention that the proposal that only those possess rights who have the power to assert rights is a formula for the certain undermining of human rights in law and morality. My remark about Grobstein's argument being "an advance over earlier pro-choice advocacy" was simply an acknowledgment that he at least recognizes the need to think seriously about what or who it is in the womb that is involved in our debates about abortion, fetal experimentation, and the such. Mr. Bomar and I are at one in believing that *the* question is the obligation of the strong to the weak.

Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his otherwise sound review of Abigail Thernstrom's *Whose Votes Count?* [Books in Review, June], Barry R. Gross mistakenly identifies L. Douglas Wilder as the lieutenant governor of West Virginia. Wilder is, of course, the lieutenant governor of Virginia and the Democratic nominee for governor. If he defeats Republican Marshall Coleman this year, he will become the country's first black state chief executive.

RICHARD H. GENTILE
Easton, Massachusetts

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Hastening the Death of Communism

Jean-François Revel

WHAT policy should the democracies adopt toward the Communist world at this stage of its evolution? Toward what *end* should such a policy be directed?

Ever since Communism came upon the global scene, Western analysts have persisted in seeing change where there has been no real change. Popular uprisings, glimmerings of economic liberalization—all such developments have been hailed as practically synonymous with an achieved democratization. As soon as things begin to budge a little, *voilà*, the deed is considered as good as done, all we need do is applaud. In early May of this year, to take just the most recent example, virtually every major paper in the Western world proclaimed a "return of freedom" in China. In France, President François Mitterrand went so far as to compare the Chinese demonstrations of 1989 with the French uprising two hundred years earlier—that is to say, with an effective change of regime.

Yet theories of revolution borrowed from the history of other nations are of doubtful applicability to Communist societies. We have, in Communism, a hitherto unknown type, and to this day we have never observed it undergo a complete change of regime. A little prudence would therefore have been in order before democracy was declared triumphant in China. The bloody repression of June 4, ordered by the great "liberal" Deng Xiaoping himself (together with Prime Minister Li Peng), might then have come as less of a shock to Westerners already making arrangements to attend the inauguration of the first democratically elected Chinese president.

Nor was the June bloodbath merely a temporary spasm, the result of a passing fit of lunacy. It was followed by a return to massive terror in the purest tradition of Mao and Stalin: systematic manhunts, mass arrests, roundups of suspects, public humiliation of the "guilty," mobilization of the media, especially television, to disseminate pictures of the accused, appeals to viewers to inform the police of their whereabouts, the blackmailing of families to denounce their own relatives, a mass campaign to inculcate the proper "lessons" of the events. And while, in the Eastern hemisphere, the Chinese were replaying the Great Terror *circa* 1937, in the Western hemisphere Fidel Castro was mounting a reprise of the Moscow trials. Behind an indictment for drug trafficking—a real enough enterprise of which, however, Castro himself is the principal "godfather" and true ringmaster—the Cuban leader condemned to death a number of his oldest and most faithful comrades. The courtroom proceedings, during which the accused "confessed" their crimes and begged for the "honor" of being executed in the name of the Revolution, replicated to the letter the Soviet judicial farces of the late 30's.

All this—and especially the stunning setbacks in China—have again reminded us of the fallacy or, at best, the partiality of the judgment that Communism has passed out of its Stalinist phase and entered definitively the stage of "post-totalitarian" society. Some such judgment, to repeat, has been made again and again over the last seventy years, and has just as often been falsified by events. To be sure, it can be objected that thanks to *glasnost*, we have a lot more information at our disposal. That is true—but there was no lack of information earlier, either, even if it was not freely divulged by the parties immediately concerned. Yet we in the democracies—and not just Communists and their sympathizers, but statesmen and others nominally hostile to Communism—chose the path of self-deception. There are few grounds for thinking we have suddenly developed an immunity to that peculiar virus.

Indeed, one factor in the exceptional longevity of Communist systems has been, precisely, the credulity of the democracies, which seem to wake up each morning imagining these systems "cured" of totalitarianism. As a consequence, the Western nations obligingly assist them in getting around their difficulties and in withstanding the pressures that threaten them from within. According to normal criteria of political success, the Bolshevik regime, given the massive disasters it had brought about and its manifest incapacity to

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govern the country, or any country, should have foundered in 1921. That this emblem of failure has managed to drag itself along until nearly the end of the century says something not only about the resilience of Communism as a political system but also about the willingness, if not the desire, of the non-Communist and anti-Communist West to close its eyes to its own proper interests and values.

But now Communism is undergoing, famously, a seizure of conscience, and this opens again the question I raised some months ago in these pages, "Is Communism Reversible?" (January 1989).

In totalitarian regimes the normal relation between government and governed is inverted. Instead of acting as a seismograph on which the tremors of society may register their varying degrees of intensity and duration, a totalitarian regime presets the instrument to its own preferred reading and expects the earth to adjust *its* movements accordingly; if, nevertheless, the earth persists in quaking, it may just have to be shot. In the immortal words of an official communiqué of the East German Communist party after the 1953 rebellion, "In light of what has occurred, the people have assuredly lost the confidence of the government."

But during the 80's, first in Poland, China, and Yugoslavia, then in the USSR and more recently in Hungary, something seems to have happened to the longstanding capacity of the system to prevent a social or economic crisis from developing into a political threat. Political authority, pushed by a deepening economic crisis, has in turn begun to play the role of a more or less properly functioning seismograph, and to a greater extent than during previous periods of "thaw." Moreover, in Poland the underlying principle of the system—namely, the monopoly of the Communist party—has been effectively challenged for the first time in any Communist country. In Hungary, and even the Soviet Union, elections have also taken place which, though they have practically nothing in common with fully democratic balloting, are a very far cry from previous such exercises. Finally, these elections have been preceded by, accompanied by, and followed by an avalanche of information and criticism, pitiless examinations of the past that have begun with the Stalinist terror and the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 and have proceeded all the way to attacks on the sources and guiding doctrines of the system itself. The mere fact that Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* is now being published in the Soviet Union is a tacit acknowledgment that the evil runs back to 1917 itself, the Bolshevik seizure of power.

To be sure, Mikhail Gorbachev continues to proclaim otherwise, to reaffirm ceaselessly that by his policy of *perestroika* he intends not the abandonment but the renewal of socialism. Nevertheless, the vices he condemns as the major obstacles to economic recovery, the maladies besetting the system, happen to conform perfectly with the principal characteristics of socialism. And as for the remedies which he would apply, they will, if followed faithfully, lead ineluctably to the dismantling of socialism.

Gorbachev thus finds himself trapped in essentially the same contradiction faced by the Chinese leaders, though it has hit him from a different angle. The contradiction is much more severe than that faced by countries like Hungary or Poland, where Communism was imposed from without and is therefore more derivative than organic. Such countries benefit from a "window of opportunity" provided by Gorbachev himself: given his present global policy, and especially his public-relations campaign aimed at the West, he would find it virtually impossible to halt the course of their evolution by means of force. But Hungary and Poland, important as they are to the future of Central Europe, represent a minuscule proportion of a vast Communist universe which, taken together—from Ethiopia to Cuba, from Rumania to North Korea, from Vietnam to Czechoslovakia—remains largely totalitarian. Now that China has, at least for the near term, abandoned the democratizing process in which it had rightly been seen as playing the role of a pioneer, the USSR, the motherland of Communism, has once again become the main laboratory and the critical center on which everything depends.

What Gorbachev has had to discover, in brief, is that Communism really *is* effectively irreversible as a political structure, in the sense that the system is admirably conceived and constructed so as to prohibit its own reform. Irreversibility, indeed, may be the only promise Communism has ever kept. To attempt to reform such a system is to attempt to destroy it. Gorbachev cannot propound such a solution. But it is the only solution.

Up until now, in each of its successive economic crises, the Soviet Union has been able to recharge itself for a while thanks to a mix of half-hearted and fragmentary reforms, Western cash, imported grain, and stolen technology. Now the Soviet economy has plummeted too far, the breakdown is too general, the palliatives too unavailing. The entire system is moribund, and the leadership itself no longer conceals the fact. "Do not forget, gentlemen, that we are an underdeveloped country," said the Soviet Minister of Industry to the heads of the major French chemical enterprises in June. Such statements have become legion.

Indeed, Gorbachev himself has confirmed the most extreme critiques of the system. Thus, in his May 15, 1989 report on Soviet agriculture to the Central Committee, he condemned the same policy of land collectivization which two years earlier,

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in his book *Perestroika,* he had defended as a "historical necessity" and a stage in the building of Communism. Today, Gorbachev stresses the failure of Soviet agricultural policy not only before but even *during* his own time, as when he declares, after having been in power four full years, "We are still behind the developed countries, small and large, and the gap is widening rather than narrowing."

As the French Sovietologist Françoise Thom has shown in her new book, *The Gorbachev Moment, perestroika* has passed in the course of its brief history through two distinct phases; it is now entering a third. The first phase saw an intensification of the treatment initiated by Yuri Andropov: enforcing discipline and efficiency in the workplace, combating alcoholism, rooting out "parasites," mafias, corrupt party cadres. The Andropov method was based on the idea that it would suffice to concentrate on the "human factor," to oblige everyone to do his job, and the system, such as it was, would in the end respond.

The method flopped. So, starting in July 1987, Gorbachev launched the second phase. A number of audacious ideas were floated: autonomous, self-financing enterprises, profitability, accountability of management and workforce alike, a loosening of state monopolies, facilitation of foreign trade, encouragement of small private enterprises (christened "cooperatives"), the leasing of land to farmers, reinstatement of the open sale of vodka.

Vodka aside, the second stage was a second flop. Why? Because the business enterprises were not really allowed to function autonomously but were forced to rely on the state for primary materials and machinery, for pricing schedules determined in the old, arbitrary manner, and for permission, controlled as ever by bureaucrats, to trade abroad. Because the cooperatives were no sooner legalized than they were slapped with prohibitive taxes. Because you cannot reconstitute a peasant class by decree ("It is improbable to expect to make farmers out of millions of people who no longer believe in anything, who drink, and who have lost their natural talent for farming"—thus, no less authoritative a source than *Literaturnaya Gazeta*). Because you cannot bring back to life that which has been done to death—and certainly not by means of state management.

All the evidence converges on the same point. Food shortages are worse today than in 1985, when Andropov died. At the Congress of People's Deputies on June 8, the economist Nikolai Shmelev predicted imminent catastrophe in the countryside and a return to total rationing and a Stalin-type "administered economy" unless land ownership were completely privatized, farmers were paid in hard currency, and subsidies to Cuba and Nicaragua were halted. For good measure, Shmelev asserted that the proletariat was more exploited in a socialist regime than under capitalism. According to the latest official forecast, titled, significantly, *"Perestroika* in Trouble," economic recovery now will require "two to three years for reestablishing the large macroeconomic equilibrium and then three to four years to put in place the appropriate conditions for relaunching the reforms," the latter of which would thus not come into play until the second half of the 90's.

Hence *perestroika*'s third phase: adjournment. For all practical purposes, *perestroika* has been indefinitely postponed, dispatched to that distant "glorious future" that used to be the official destiny of Communism itself.

What then can Gorbachev do? He can save the economy only by grasping the true cause of the problems, namely, the political system. But can he, would he, do away with something when it means, effectively, doing away with himself, the principal holder of political power? No. Instead, like Communist governments everywhere and in every time, he has turned for help to the capitalist countries. And here, to match the failure of *perestroika* at home, he has scored a triumph of diplomacy abroad. The aim of that diplomacy has been to transform the democracies into partners in Gorbachev's own crisis, to render them co-responsible for the Soviet future, whether that future should issue in a totalitarian reaction or in an explosion of anarchy. To put it crudely, Gorbachev aims to stick the democracies with the bill for the Bolshevik Revolution.

TAKE the unsolicited letter sent by Gorbachev to the Group of Seven industrial nations meeting in Paris in mid-July, notifying them that the USSR intends henceforth to be included in such international economic deliberations as a fully participating member, and calling on them to cancel the debts of the Third World.

Now, by virtue neither of its economic achievement nor of its economic nature is the USSR entitled to join the club of developed capitalist democracies; it is light years away from such status. As for Third World debt—money owed not to the USSR, which has never been in a position to lend substantially to the Third World, but to those same capitalist countries—it is impudent demagoguery to propose that these debts be annulled, a piece of grandstanding aimed at the Third World itself and at the expense of the very "club" to which Gorbachev has applied for membership. Yet this statement of his, displaying all the polarizing characteristics of a cold-war maneuver, was interpreted by certain participants at the European summit as a "concession" or even a "surrender" on Gorbachev's part, an acknowledgement that the Soviet Union had "lost the cold war."

True, the letter implicitly admitted economic debacle, and made an appeal for help. But instead of asking under what conditions it might be feasible to consider admitting the Soviet Union

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into the club, the Western powers meeting in Paris allowed Gorbachev to define the terms and set his own conditions. Simply on the level of public relations, he succeeded in turning himself into the main subject of conversation among the Seven, thereby bestowing a most welcome gift on the 7,000 or so seriously underoccupied journalists gathered in the French capital. Western public opinion, in the form of newspaper editorials and op-ed pieces, duly registered that the Soviet president had once again shown his desire for "dialogue," for "openness," for cooperation, and duly expressed impatience at the reluctance of Western governments to rise to the challenge.

In general, as in this particular instance, a strange inhibition renders the democracies incapable even of playing the cards they actually hold, or induces resentment when some among them make so bold as to urge the pressing of an advantage. In Paris, the United States was chastised for thinking that we were "now present at the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet empire, and that the objective of our policy toward the East should be to accelerate that process," specifically by conditioning economic aid on political concessions (*Le Monde,* July 18). Of course there is room for doubt as to whether Washington does indeed see things in this way, but one would think from *Le Monde* that it was somehow immoral to want to replace brain-dead Communist systems with open economies and democratic politics, or that the whole art of negotiation consisted in gift-giving.

Then, during his visit to France in early July, Gorbachev inveighed against those "who think of East-West rapprochement only as a means of bringing about the end of Communism," and shortly thereafter, as if to signal its concurrence, the French government announced that it was "very unfavorably impressed" with President Bush's reference, while in Poland, "to the necessity for removing Soviet troops from that country." Yet Poland is still an occupied country, pure and simple. Why should France, a country opposed to Communism, have adopted the Soviet point of view, which it finds hateful, instead of exploiting the weakness of Moscow's position on the Polish question? What do the democracies need governments for, if all they are to do is sit by passively while others bleed to advance their common cause? If, as Gorbachev demands, we are to be partners in *perestroika,* must we also be silent partners?

Actually, even silence would be preferable to the clamor emanating from some of Gorbachev's Western admirers. For example, the day after his December 8, 1988 UN speech, the lead editorial in the New York *Times* enthused: "Perhaps not since Woodrow Wilson presented his Fourteen Points in 1918 or since Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill promulgated the Atlantic Charter in 1941 has a world figure demonstrated the vision Mikhail Gorbachev displayed yesterday at the United Nations." This, of a speech that amounted to a tissue of grandiloquent banalities, hectoring of the Western democracies, flattery of the Third World, and the customary unilateral proposals for troop reductions which so impress elite opinion but which, in the context of the global correlation of forces, do nothing to affect the Soviet superiority in real numbers. It must take a terminal case of *perestroikitis* to see a likeness between two of the most generous and courageous conceptions ever formulated by Western democrats, at moments of utmost peril to the cause of liberty, and the clever but empty publicity ploy of a hard-pressed despot.

For the Communist states the ideal solution, obviously, is to undertake partial reforms while trying to maintain their systems by means of artificial respiration administered by the capitalist nations. This tricky balancing act is what every Communist country at the edge of the abyss has periodically had to manage, not only the Soviet Union and China but Vietnam, Angola, Benin, Madagascar . . . . And the West has time and again come to the rescue. But the oxygen it has periodically supplied has enabled the system to rise from its sickbed only to stumble anew. For Communism is not reparable, and repairing it is not a feasible objective. The only feasible objective is an *escape* from Communism.

The people most directly affected lean toward just this solution. After the visit of President Bush to Hungary in July, Western visitors were surprised to hear Hungarians saying they were happy that the American President had promised so little aid to their country. What good would credits do in the current mess, so long as the Communist party, however diminished in capacity, remained in power? The party, thoroughly demoralized, had nothing to offer. Aid would be squandered. The less the government was subsidized, the quicker one could expect radical change.

Such statements echoed those of Andrei Sakharov in a dire and pessimistic speech in London last June, when he warned Western powers against increasing their economic and technological aid to the Soviet Union: "In the absence of radical reforms of the Soviet system, such assistance could serve only to prop up an ailing system and delay the advent of democracy. It would be like pouring water into the sand."

Indeed, even in Poland, where the Communist party has been demoted to a junior partnership in a government led by Solidarity, Western help will be of little avail until that government really begins making good on Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki's promise to return Poland "to the market economy, and to a role of the state similar to that in economically developed countries."

Gorbachev, while conducting an energetic and effective foreign policy, while succeeding, despite

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military and economic defeat, in maintaining Communists in power in Afghanistan, in Cambodia, in Angola, in Nicaragua, while continuing patiently with efforts to create disorder and disharmony in the Atlantic alliance, while negotiating "disarmament" agreements that always work to his advantage, while perfecting Soviet espionage activities—while, in sum, pursuing the cold war by every means at his disposal—has also managed to produce an effect of inhibition and even intimidation in the democracies. One cannot blame him: he looks after his own interests as he is legitimately entitled to do. Our mistake is to believe that he holds himself responsible for our interests as well.

In those interests, as well as in the interests of the people living under Communism, Western policy should be directed at accelerating the dissolution of that system, at rendering its disappearance the more rapid, so as to shorten, insofar as possible, the inevitable period of ensuing anarchy. Let us remember, once more, what the alternative is—namely, some sort of resumption of the détente of the 70's. And let us remember what Gorbachev himself has told us about the effects of détente: not the dynamism and modernization promised by its Western promoters, accompanied by a moderation of foreign aggression, but, to the contrary, "stagnation" and even coma in the domestic economy, accompanied by military expansionism, a huge arms build-up, disastrous foreign adventures. Communist leaders may have no desire or incentive to learn from our errors; but can we?

ONCE it was considered bad form to criticize the Soviet Union for its faults, since doing so could only serve to delay the advent of that impossible dream, the perfect society promised by Communist ideology. Today it is considered bad form to criticize *perestroika*, since doing so can only delay the advent of that other impossible dream, the reform of Communism. But *perestroika* is effectively dead, and we cannot resuscitate it. If the objective is the provisional repair of a socialist economy by means of a number of capitalist-style prosthetic devices, and especially by means of Western credit, the democracies should absolutely refrain from lending a hand. What sense does it make for us to keep alive regimes that are permanent sources of misery in the world, from famine in Ethiopia to the flotillas of Vietnamese boat people whom no one wants to receive, not to mention the Cuban drug traffic and other fine specimens of Communism at work?

These systems will always be adversary to our own, no matter what services we render them. Instead of worrying over the metaphysical question of whether or not the cold war has ended, we would do better to address any number of concrete issues—Central America; European disarmament; strategic bases in the Philippines and Vietnam; Soviet penetration into the South Pacific; Soviet diplomacy toward post-Khomeini Iran and in Afghanistan after the departure of the Red Army; the bloody Chinese occupation of Tibet; the future of Hong Kong; etc., etc.—and to try and resolve these issues in accordance with our own values and principles, not in accordance with those imposed on us by Moscow, Beijing, Hanoi, or Havana. We have, in fact, but one duty: improving the prospects of democracy and peace in the world. Both the one and the other are incompatible with the very structures of Communist society. The anti-Communist revolution must therefore proceed to its appointed end, and we must hasten it toward that end.

When one believes oneself lacking in political means, usually one has not defined one's political ends. If we do not clearly set our policy, we will not have one: Gorbachev, or whoever, will impose on us his own. We, meanwhile, will vacillate between smiling fondly at those who genuinely want to escape from Communism, like the Poles and the Hungarians, and arranging blood transfusions for the moribund incurables of the Bolshevik heartland. How to liberate 300 million human beings in the Soviet Union, and many millions of others elsewhere, from the total impasse into which Communism has thrust them—it is in such terms that we must articulate the problem, and its solution. Then we can devote ourselves to mobilizing the means.

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A False Start in the Middle East

Eugene V. Rostow

THE morgues of newspapers are filled with reports on plans which successive American administrations had hoped would produce peace between Israel and its neighbors: the Rogers Plan, the Vance Plan, the Shultz Plan, and a number of equally futile European initiatives as well. With Secretary of State James Baker's speech to AIPAC of May 22, 1989, the Bush administration joined this melancholy company.

Today, several months later, Secretary Baker's speech is still the only general statement of Middle East policy the Bush administration has made since taking office. The President himself has endorsed it a number of times. And it certainly seems to explain what the administration is trying to achieve in its talks with the PLO, Israel, and the Arab states, as well as in the actions it has taken with respect to Middle East issues.

In that speech, Secretary Baker said that the overriding goal of American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict is "a comprehensive settlement achieved through negotiations based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338." In advancing that proposition, Baker faithfully repeats what has been the major bipartisan premise of American policy in the region since 1967. Yet the speech itself contains a number of statements fundamentally inconsistent with those resolutions.*

For example, Baker declares that

> in advance of direct negotiations, the United States and no other party, inside or outside, can or will dictate an outcome. That is why the United States does not support annexation or permanent Israeli control of the West Bank or Gaza, nor do we support the creation of an independent Palestinian state.
>
> I would add here that we do have an idea about the reasonable middle ground to which a settlement should be directed. That is, self-government for Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza in a manner acceptable to Palestinians, Israel, and Jordan. Such a formula provides ample scope for Palestinians to achieve their full political rights. It also provides ample protection for Israel's security as well.

Baker goes on to observe:

> For many Israelis, it will not be easy to enter a negotiating process whose successful outcome will in all probability involve territorial withdrawal and the emergence of a new political reality.

He then sums up as follows:

> For Israel, now is the time to lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel. Israeli interests in the West Bank and Gaza—security and otherwise—can be accommodated in a settlement based on Resolution 242. Forswear annexation. Stop settlement activity. Allow schools to reopen. Reach out to Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights.

When Baker says that the United States opposes Israeli annexation or permanent control in the West Bank (and equally opposes a third Palestinian state in the area), is he talking only of the period before the final peace negotiations or about the ultimate peace settlement itself? Despite the confusion of the Secretary's language here, his speech has been generally interpreted as an announcement that in the long run the United States regards the entire West Bank as off-limits to Israel and favors the emergence of a form of Palestinian Arab self-government in the area which would constitute a new political reality, if not quite another independent Palestinian state. The distinction on which his opposition to a third

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* The essence of Resolution 242, adopted after the Six-Day War of 1967, is that Israel remain in control of the territories it occupied in 1967 until "the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East." It decrees that peace should be achieved by agreement among the states in the area providing for the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from some but not all of the occupied territories to "secure and recognized boundaries." Resolution 338, voted after the Yom Kippur War of 1973, makes 242 mandatory, and orders the parties to make peace "immediately" through direct negotiations pursuant to its terms.

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Palestinian state depends, however, is fragile, to say the least.

If this reading of Baker's text is correct, his position is flatly contrary to the territorial provisions of Resolution 242. That resolution was drafted with the thorny problems of the West Bank in everybody's mind. It was assumed at the time that Israel and Jordan would divide the territory between them, agree on security arrangements, an economic union, and a form of political cooperation as well, and then each country would annex the parts of the West Bank assigned to it by their agreement.

Thus, if Baker's text means what it seems to say, it declares a startling new proposition—namely, that Resolution 242 requires Israel to withdraw to the armistice demarcation lines as they stood in 1967, leaving its security to be protected by demilitarized zones and other special devices within an Arab West Bank state.

The assumption behind Baker's position must be that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip "belong" in some sense to Jordan, to the Arabs who now live there, or to an inchoate state of "Palestine." None of these is the case. Legally, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are unallocated parts of the Palestine Mandate. So far as Jordan's claim is concerned, the world community and especially the other Arab states refused to recognize its attempt to annex the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem in 1951. And so far as the claim of the Arabs who live there goes, it must be remembered that, in contrast to other League of Nations Mandates, the Palestine Mandate was not established as a trust for the indigenous population of the area, to be terminated when that population was ready for self-government. It was set up under a different article of the League Covenant as a trust for the Jewish people, in recognition of their historic connection with the land, on condition that the civic and religious rights of the Muslims and Christians living in the territory be respected.

Moreover, the right of the Jewish people to settle in the West Bank under the Mandate has never been terminated. The Jewish right of settlement was suspended by the British in 1921 only for the East Bank—that is, for what was then the Transjordanian province of the Palestine Mandate, and is now Jordan. Jewish settlement in the West Bank is therefore not an intrusion into alien territory held as a result of war, nor (as the State Department used to contend) a violation of the Geneva Convention. It is, rather, the exercise of a right protected by Article 80 of the United Nations Charter and hence necessarily part of the domestic law applicable in the West Bank.

For some years, the United States government has objected to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, occasionally on legal grounds but more recently only for political reasons. Often with asperity, American spokesmen charge that Jewish settlements obstruct the peace process. It is impossible to discover a basis for this view, since there were no Israeli settlements in the area during the period of Jordanian military occupation, and no peace either. On the contrary, many believe the process of "creeping Israeli annexation" of the West Bank has helped to persuade some Arab leaders that peace is necessary.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has also been much criticized in the United States for claiming the whole of the West Bank for Israel. Contemplating the possibility of a negotiation between Israel and Arabs who regard it as a concession to claim only the entire West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem as a precondition for talks, it would be astonishing if Shamir took a different opening position. But he has said over and over again, most formally in an article in *Foreign Affairs* in 1988, that after a five-year period of peaceful coexistence between Israel and the autonomous Arab entity he advocates for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the peacemaking process would necessarily face the "difficult issue of sovereignty." Shamir's position is fully compatible with Resolution 242, which leaves it to the parties to agree on "secure and recognized boundaries."

Finally, the idea of a third Palestinian state for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was carefully considered when Resolution 242 was being drafted, and then rejected. Such a state, it was thought, would be a source of instability in the region, a threat to Israel, and a serious blow to King Hussein, a close associate both of Great Britain and of the United States. Those considerations remain persuasive today.

Baker's speech has an additional and quite different denotation in the Middle East. When the Secretary of State used the phrase "Greater Israel," he probably intended only an Israel that would include the territories captured in the Six-Day War and especially the West Bank. But as a noted student of the Middle East, Daniel Pipes of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, has pointed out,* "in the Arab world and many of the Muslim countries, [this phrase] means something much grander: not Israeli retention of the West Bank, but Israeli conquest of a huge area stretching from Egypt to Iran." For example, Yasir Arafat often says that the two blue lines on the Israeli flag represent the Nile and Euphrates rivers, "and in between is Israel," while the Syrian prime minister declares that the dream of a "Greater Israel" not only includes the whole of Palestine but Turkey, Iran, and Africa as well. Thus, writes Pipes, "The American Secretary of State's call on Israelis to lay aside 'the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel' had two main effects. It provided authoritative confirmation of a deeply-held and cherished fantasy; worse, in a strange way, it made the U.S.

* Washington *Jewish Week*, July 6, 1989.

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government a party to the political hallucinations of others."

BAKER's comments on Shamir's proposal for an election to select Arab interlocutors for the first round of negotiations with Israel raise equally basic questions under Resolution 242. Baker agrees with Israel that the time is not ripe for the immediate negotiation of a final settlement, and urges consultation on standards for a workable election process as a step toward an interim solution. "Such elections," Baker writes,

> should be free and fair, and free of interference from any quarter. Through open access to media and outside observers, the integrity of the electoral process can be affirmed. And participation in the elections should be as open as possible.

These unexceptionable words scarcely hint at the real issues involved. The PLO has taken the position, which the Arab summit in Morocco of May 1989 has supported, that Israeli military forces should withdraw from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip before elections are held and that the elections should be conducted by outside governments or by the United Nations. They are urging as well that a vote be given to the Arab inhabitants of Jerusalem and to Palestinian Arabs living in Jordan and other countries of the world. These are naked attempts to drown out the voice of the Arab residents of the occupied territories, to annul the Israeli annexation of the Old City of Jerusalem, to establish a right of return for all Palestinians living abroad, and thus to destroy the possibility of a peaceful settlement altogether. What is the American position on these explosive issues? We are left with the Delphic sentence that "participation in the elections should be as open as possible." The Secretary of State has a well-known propensity for "splitting the difference." But these are matters of life and death for Israel on which no compromise is possible.

Baker urges Palestinian Arabs living in the West Bank not to "shy away from a dialogue with Israel that can transform the current environment." What does it mean when a man as sophisticated and worldly as Baker makes such a statement without mentioning the fact that Arabs who take such steps are being murdered as "collaborators," a policy openly defended by PLO leaders like Professor Edward Said of Columbia?* The United States is conducting exploratory talks with the PLO. Can the American government tolerate the murder of those who follow the advice of its Secretary of State and still accept the PLO as a peacemaker? Can it acquiesce in the PLO's claim of a right to wage war against Israel reiterated as recently as August 11 in the face not only of Resolution 242 but of earlier binding Security Council decisions that no party to the Arab-Israeli dispute can claim belligerent rights?

There is another omission in Baker's treatment of the elections which raises grave questions under Resolution 242. Baker does not point out that Israel is vested by Resolution 242 with the authority to administer the occupied territories until the Arab states of the region make a just and lasting peace. Israel may consult with others about the modalities of the elections, but holding the elections is its sole responsibility as the only legitimate governmental authority in the area.

This feature of Resolution 242 is not an arid legalism. It is the response of the Security Council to the fact that after the Suez war of 1956 Israel withdrew from the Sinai in reliance on Nasser's promises to stop guerrilla attacks from Egyptian territory; to open the Suez Canal and the Strait of Tiran to Israeli shipping; and to make peace. The last of those promises was broken when Nasser closed the Strait of Tiran, and thus started the Six-Day War.

After all that has happened since Israel withdrew from the Sinai in 1957 without peace, it would be suicidal for the Israelis to remove one soldier from the occupied territories until the conditions of Resolution 242 are met, and foolhardy to share the responsibility for the election with any other country or institution.

TWO other features of Baker's speech should be mentioned—his equivocal treatment of the issue of an international conference, and the passages in which he addresses the Soviets.

On the much mooted issue of a conference, Baker says that

> for negotiations to succeed, they must allow the parties to deal directly with each other, face to face. A properly structured international conference could be useful *at an appropriate time*, but only if it did not interfere with or in any way replace or be a substitute for the direct talks. [Emphasis in original]

No experienced person can suppose for a moment that the delegates, and especially the Soviet delegates, to an international conference on one of the most bitterly contested issues in world politics would sit by supinely and allow the parties to negotiate by themselves in the corridors.

As to the Soviets, Baker's speech contains two paragraphs devoted to them. The first reports that when he had been in Moscow a few days earlier, he was told that Soviet policy was changing, that the emigration laws were being reconsidered, and that the restrictions on Jewish worship and communal life were being loosened. He was told as

* See "Professor of Terror" by Edward Alexander in the August 1989 COMMENTARY.

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well that Shamir's election plan was "worthy of study." These, Baker avers, "are all positive signs." But the Soviets must go farther, he adds, to convince us "that they are serious about new thinking in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Let Moscow restore diplomatic ties with Israel, for example, promote a serious peace process, not just empty slogans," and behave responsibly about selling sophisticated arms to countries like Libya. It goes without saying that none of the steps Baker mentioned has been taken.

Nor is there any evidence as yet that the Soviet Union has given up its longstanding policy of seeking to gain control of the Middle East and the North African littoral. It has a major new naval base in Syria and continues to supply that country with arms on a large scale; it has entered into a sweeping alliance with Iran; and it has strengthened its already close ties with Libya.

The *intifada* is, of course, the driving force behind the urgency of Baker's speech. He agrees with Shamir, he tells us, that the status quo is unacceptable. Its continuance, he adds, would mean increasing violence and worsening prospects for peace. And he appeals to the Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to translate "the dialogue of violence in the *intifada* into a dialogue of politics and diplomacy." The speech has no word of criticism for those who are directing the rioting or participating in it, although it is an armed attack against Israel. The Arabs of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have a genuine grievance, but it is not a grievance against Israel. Not surprisingly, they object to living under alien military occupation, which has now lasted for more than twenty years. Most of them are Jordanian citizens and carry Jordanian passports, but Jordan will not allow them to resettle in Jordan, as many reportedly wish to do. And for the entire period of the Israeli occupation the Arab governments supposed to represent the Arabs of the West Bank in world politics have refused to make peace with Israel, and thereby bring the occupation to an end. The West Bank Arabs and the Arab residents of the Gaza Strip have been treated as pawns in the Arab war against Israel, while the PLO and other Arab voices have preached the gospel of destroying Israel altogether. The leaders of the Arab states have clung to those sterile positions both out of principle and out of fear. Terrorists of several persuasions have demonstrated that moderate Arab leaders risk their own lives and those of their families if they show the slightest sign of being willing to carry out the prescriptions of Resolutions 242 and 338.

Resolutions 242 and 338 are not icons, but they provide the only possible basis for peace for two simple reasons. They are the only guidelines for peace at least nominally agreed to by all the parties concerned, and they squarely confront the only cause of the prolonged conflict in the Levant: the steadfast refusal of the Arab states, except for Egypt after 1977, to make peace with Israel. This is an uncomfortable fact that the Western nations prefer to ignore whenever they can. Baker's speech follows that timid practice. One hopes this does not mean that the Bush administration is seriously attempting to abandon 242. No foreseeable majority in the Israeli Knesset or cabinet could accept such a betrayal, and no American government concerned with the protection of American interests in the Middle East should consider it.

Like so many of his predecessors who have plunged into this intractable issue, then, Baker has made a false start. But there is still time for him to learn what most of them discovered in their turn—that the Arab-Israeli conflict cannot be "solved" by verbal dexterity and a few gestures of sympathy for both sides, that (like the status of Northern Ireland, or the fate of the Basques in Spain or of the Kurds throughout the Middle East) it is one of those problems that have to be lived with, at least until the Arab states decide to abide by Resolutions 242 and 338 and do what all of them except Egypt have thus far adamantly refused to do: call off the war they have been waging against Israel for over forty years and finally make peace with the Jewish state.

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On Being a Jew

Sidney Hook

Although Sidney Hook *wrote hundreds of books and articles in the course of his great career as a philosopher and political controversialist, he devoted relatively little attention either to his own Jewishness or to issues of specifically Jewish concern. But about nine months before his death on July 12, 1989, he agreed to be interviewed on these matters for the William E. Wiener Oral History Library of the American Jewish Committee.*

The interview was conducted in New York on October 25, 1988 by Norman Podhoretz, *the editor of* Commentary, *and lasted two and one-half hours. What follows is an edited version of the transcript, which Hook, to the best of his family's knowledge, unfortunately never had a chance to review; it appears here by permission of his family. Both the original tapes and the unedited transcript are on deposit in the Wiener Library.*

Sidney Hook's association with Commentary *began in 1946 and lasted until the end of his life. His influence on this magazine over the years was enormous, and his incomparable political and intellectual courage remains an abiding inspiration.*

NP: Sidney, most of the basic facts of your life are well known and have been spelled out in your autobiography, *Out of Step*, so we won't spend any more time on them than we need to set the stage for this discussion of you as a Jew and of your attitude toward things Jewish. When and where, then, were you born?

SH: I was born on December 20, 1902: it was, I am told, in a building on the corner of Essex and Houston Street. When I was three years old, the family moved to Brooklyn and I was brought up there, in the Williamsburg slum, until I achieved self-consciousness and a professional viability.

NP: So you went from the Lower East Side to Williamsburg: a good American Jewish trajectory. When and where were your parents born?

SH: I don't know the exact dates of their births, but my mother came from a town called Sambur, which was in Galicia. My father, I infer from his name, which was spelled H-u-k with a little mark over the *u*, must have come from an area of Austria close to Czechoslovakia, what was known as Bohemia in those days.

NP: And when did they come to America?

SH: My father came here in the second administration of Cleveland, so it must have been in 1890 or thereabouts. But maybe even earlier, because he had memories of the famous snowstorm in New York, which I think took place at the end of the 1880's. My mother came a few years later. They met here and got married here.

NP: What was your father's profession or business?

SH: Actually, it was rather unusual. My father was brought up on a farm and he had all the superstitious knowledge of European farmers. He attributed his bowlegs to the fact that he had ridden on horses, but was puzzled that I inherited the same bowlegs without ever having been on a horse.

NP: A *Galitzianer* cowboy.

SH: But when he came here, there were some relatives in the garment industry and he became a garment worker. So he was a factory worker most of his life, except at one period when he tried to become a contractor, where most of the staff working for him consisted of his brothers and cousins.

NP: Did you have brothers and sisters?

SH: Yes, I had two brothers, one of whom died before I was born, and two sisters.

NP: What order were you?

SH: I was the third surviving child.

NP: Did you receive any religious training as a child? Was the Sabbath observed, holidays, anything like that?

SH: Unfortunately, I received the traditional religious education. I went to a *cheder* which was taught by a man who, having failed at everything else, tried to make a living teaching the ABC's. He knew a little more than that, he held some advanced classes in *Gemara*, but I never reached that stage.

We were rebellious, Americanized Jewish kids who read the Bible and didn't understand very much because it was translated into Yiddish rather

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than English. And we were very mischievous and very reluctant to go to *cheder*. As we grew a little older we made our rabbi's life miserable by asking him embarrassing questions. I still recall how we would ask him about Cain and Abel, where did they get their wives? He wasn't able to tell us, so we suggested, maybe from the *shiksas* around.

I don't want to put too much emphasis upon this from the point of view of larger ethical issues. We raised these questions really in order to embarrass him. For example, we would make a fuss about Jacob's stealing Esau's blessings, and I still remember his indignation when we asked, Isn't that wrong? He said: You know, Esau was an animal, so what kind of question is that to ask? But what we got really beaten for was when we read about how Moses wanted Pharaoh to let the Jews of Egypt go, but God hardened the heart of Pharaoh to keep them, and then when they were finally released, all the Egyptians were drowned in the Red Sea. So we said—in the imperfect Yiddish that we could muster—after all, God hardened Pharaoh's heart, so why then did He punish the Egyptians by drowning them? And he said, We don't ask questions like that.

It was when I really began to think about this kind of thing, at the age of twelve, that I lost my religious faith. My mother had had a child who was killed in an accident. They had bought a puppy for him at the age of one or two and the puppy overturned some kettle and the baby was scalded to death. That was the first of her children, and whenever she talked about it she was very, very sad. So at the age of twelve already, I had discovered the problem of evil and nobody could give me an adequate answer as to why the innocent suffer and why the guilty prosper.

Oh, the obvious rationalization was that if something happened to an individual and it wasn't his fault, then his father had done something wrong. But even a bright twelve-year-old could respond, Then why don't you punish the father? And what about those passages in the Bible where it says, I shall visit the sins of the fathers upon the heads of their children unto the third and fourth generations?

And so just before I was supposed to be bar mitzvah I expressed some reluctance about the whole thing and said that I didn't want to go to *shul*, because I didn't believe in God. The general attitude was, Look, God doesn't care whether you believe in Him or not. You go to *shul* anyhow. But not getting bar mitzvah, that was a great social blow, my parents said it would be a *shanda*, a disgrace, what would the neighbors think? So I became bar mitzvah.

Of course, when I describe the past I'm giving it a sophistication which it didn't have. As I said, there was more mischief than profundity involved in the kind of questions we asked. But much later, when I used to debate that Orthodox woman, Trude Weiss-Rosmarin, she would end up by saying, What you contend is testimony to the fact that you received a bad Jewish education. The implication being that if I had been properly taught, I would have retained my religious belief.

Now, one thing comes back to me that I've never thought of before. This rabbi who taught us, he was a man who himself had probably never faced these questions. He had common sense, but some of the questions we asked him couldn't be answered with common sense. For instance, we once thought we had him over a barrel. In the daily prayer I recall there is a sentence where you thank God that you weren't born a woman. Well, we asked him, why is it that you thank God?

NP: Was this premature feminism?

SH: Oh, no, no. We thought there was something involving sex here, we were very curious, and we wanted him to talk about it.

NP: So it was just prurience.

SH: He thought for a moment and he said, Well, you thank God you were not born a woman because every time a person is born a woman's life is in danger. So men thank God that their lives are not so endangered. I'm sure that's not an Orthodox answer, he thought it up, but it satisfied us and it silenced us. We knew what women had to endure when they gave birth, because I'm talking about 1912, 1911, when women would have their babies at home.

NP: You've already alluded to Yiddish. Was Yiddish spoken at home or English?

SH: Actually, on the whole English, because most of the communication was between us and our mother, who must have had an excellent ear because she spoke English without an accent.

NP: Really?

SH: Yes. My father spoke English with an accent. But he left early in the morning, well before we were up, and when he came home at night it was very late, so we didn't engage in much conversation with him, except when my mother would complain about our behavior. Then he was the disciplinarian, the task-master.

NP: I take it, just to go forward a bit, that you never did satisfactorily resolve the problem of evil that caused you to lose your faith.

SH: I have found that the problem of evil has been a bone on which theologians have choked for thousands of years. It's been faced by every religion. According to the American philosopher Charles Peirce, the problem of evil is a problem that can't be solved. The only way I know that it can be answered technically is through the doctrine of reincarnation, as in Hinduism or in Buddhism. If you are suffering, then this is a sign that in a previous incarnation you committed some horrible crime. So what is seen as unjust in this world is punishment for past misbehavior.

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But this only meets the problem through a series of fantasies.

Now, Einstein ended up believing there's a God because you cannot explain the organization of the universe in terms of chance.

NP: "God doesn't play dice with the universe."

SH: Yes, but even if there is a principle of rationality and you call that God, how do you square that with the problem of evil? What good does it do to say we live in a world of order in which the innocent suffer and the guilty often die in bed? And yet, look, there are occasions in my own life when the ships have come in, when my grandchildren achieve their goals, or when I've escaped or they have escaped some hazard, when I'm in the mood of thanksgiving, and I would like to thank something . . .

NP: And you look for someone to thank?

SH: . . . but that's the only time.

NP: I take it that after bar mitzvah you had no further Jewish education of a formal kind, or of any kind really.

SH: None. Unfortunately. Unfortunately, because later on I began to believe that it was a great mistake not to give Jewish children a historical education, so they would have a better appreciation of their roots. When I grew older I recognized that even though I was appalled by some of the things in the Bible, they could be presented in a way that would at least make Jewish children proud of their origins, even if they didn't believe. Here, for instance, was a people who for the first time in the history of mankind decreed a day of rest, a day of rest not only for humans but for all sentient beings, and this bespoke a consciousness and a sensitivity at a time when the peoples around them were more barbaric. Of course the Jews never condemned slavery, but look at the rules in the Bible which govern slavery, or think of the jubilee, the fact that every fifty years slavery is abolished and you start from scratch.

Now, we weren't taught that when we were children, and I regret it. I think children of middle-class Jews fare better today. Even the children in the 30's and 40's who went to Sholem Aleichem schools, where the Bible was interpreted from a socialist point of view, and Moses was presented as the first trade-union organizer . . .

NP: Moses as Joe Hill?

SH: . . . Well, it's better than growing up with a negativism that comes from being taught by illiterate pedagogues.

NP: I take it your mother kept a kosher home?

SH: My mother kept a kosher home, yes.

NP: When did you first violate the laws of *kashrut*, do you remember? Was it as a little boy, or later?

SH: I never deliberately violated them. I discovered that I had an organic revulsion to eating ham, which I think I did for the first time when I was in college.

NP: Me, too.

SH: I didn't care for it particularly. Maybe that had something to do with pride, too. You see, I grew up in a community where the elders still had very strong apprehensions of what the Gentiles would do to them. Not that there was any mob violence to fear—but there *was* a store in Williamsburg in which there was a missionary, himself a convert from Judaism, trying to convert Jews to Christianity. But the interesting thing is that nobody ever went there, and everybody regarded it with open hostility. In other words, although we had no religious faith, we never thought of accepting any other.

And that is terribly important, at least it was for us: we were aware that we were Jewish, and although we didn't really know too much about it, we were very militant in expressing our Jewishness and defending the Jews against attacks, and we wouldn't even dream of conversion, or, later on, of leaving the fold for the belly's sake. We even had a sort of a negative feeling when we read about someone who had been converted, like Karl Marx's father, or Heinrich Heine, who said that conversion was a way of getting into European society. We had no real faith, but we thought it was inappropriate and undignified to renounce our religion; it was like renouncing yourself.

NP: Despite this militant feeling about the Jews, you weren't at that stage of your life interested in Zionism. Did you know about it, did you, in your teens, have a reaction to it?

SH: My older sister was a Zionist.

NP: How about your parents?

SH: No. No, they weren't. I knew the anthem *Ha-Tikvah* well enough to sing it, but the whole thing didn't have much of an impact. The idea of going to Palestine—for us, you know, even going to Staten Island was a big thing. . . . You must remember, these were the years just prior to World War I and then during the war, and Zionists didn't play a role in our particular universe, though of course I learned later on about the Balfour Declaration and so forth.

NP: You were then going to Boys High School in Brooklyn.

SH: Yes, I went to Boys High School beginning in February 1916, and by that time I was a young socialist. I had a friend whose father used to read the *Call*, the socialist paper, and he and his father would make very sophisticated remarks about the status quo. Then when I was in high school I read Jack London's novel, *Martin Eden*, and became a socialist myself.

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NP: Did that have any relation to your feelings about Zionism? Did you regard it, from a socialist point of view, as a form of reactionary bourgeois nationalism?

SH: Well, not so much that in particular as the fact that my becoming a socialist absorbed all my political energies. We American socialists were one of the few socialist movements in the world to oppose the entry of the United States into the war, and that unleashed a fury against us.

NP: Was Boys High in those days heavily Jewish? It certainly was later, in the 1940's, when I went there.

SH: The student body was heavily Jewish, but there were few Jewish teachers. Most of the teachers were rejects from other professions, people who had been clergymen or journalists or what not, and they knew nothing about teaching. We weren't encouraged to ask questions. Still, by conventional standards, Boys High was an elite institution. For one thing, when you graduated from elementary school only half the class would go on to high school; the rest got working papers. Then, too, a great many students dropped out of high school if their families couldn't afford to have them not working. But my parents were concerned about education, and wanted me to go to college. Not that they knew what I was studying or why. All the decisions I made were my own, some of them foolish.

NP: I assume you got very good grades in high school.

SH: No.

NP: You didn't?

SH: No, no, no. Not even in English and history classes, where I knew more than the teachers. I still remember my history teacher was outraged when I said we lost the War of 1812. And I still remember the day the chemistry teacher came to my home class, and said, just point him out to me, I want to see what he looks like. I was considered really a Bolshevik.

NP: You graduated from Boys High in 1919, and then you went to City College to study philosophy. Morris Raphael Cohen was already a professor there, wasn't he?

SH: He was, but on leave when I got there. It wasn't until my second year that I studied with him, and he made all the difference in the world. He was the first man I had ever met who was sharper, keener, smarter than I was.

NP: Were you conscious in any salient way of the fact that Morris Raphael Cohen was Jewish? Did it make any difference?

SH: Oh, well, anyone who heard Morris Raphael Cohen speak English couldn't doubt that he was Jewish. He spoke with a pronounced accent, and occasionally, even in class, he would drop a Yiddish word. Once he told us that he gave a lecture and someone came up to him and asked him, do you speak Yiddish? "In New York," he answered, *"hob ich a breireh?,"* do I have any alternative? But we also were aware that Morris Cohen had written an essay in the *New Republic* on Zionism, "The Fallacy of Tribalism," and that made quite a difference to us. We weren't aware that Horace Kallen, then teaching at the New School for Social Research, had responded with a rebuttal.

Now, Cohen—I've written about him at length and I won't repeat—was a remarkably critical mind and I owe him a great deal, even though we ended up disagreeing with each other in fierce ways. He was a very disappointed man. He should have been teaching at a university, but it was almost impossible for Jews at that time.

Cohen had studied at Columbia with F.J.E. Woodbridge, then he took his Ph.D. at Harvard, where he roomed with Felix Frankfurter. But he originally got his job at the College of the City of New York not in philosophy but at the College's elite high school, Townsend Harris, teaching mathematics. Finally, through some fluke he was able to transfer to the philosophy department.

If Cohen had taught at a university, he would have met people of his own caliber and would have perhaps softened the rough edges of his personality. But in his classrooms he was an intellectual tyrant, and excellent for people like me. I became a very formidable logician—anybody coming out of Cohen's classes would go around correcting people's inferences, so that after a while it used to be said that you could see the mark of Cain on them. The mark of Cohen.

NP: His essay on Zionism as tribalism, did you agree with it?

SH: At that time, yes, because it reinforced the very strong feeling that I had against nationalism. We were all impressed with his argument, everybody was reacting then against the excesses of nationalism, which the war had illustrated. And we were young, idealistic socialists, we were universalists, although we were also prepared to defend the right of any nation to self-determination. We just never thought of the Jews in the same way.

Of course, the case against nationalism in the abstract is unanswerable, but if you take your point of departure not from abstract principles but from the historic situation which you find yourself in, then these abstractions are often irrelevant.

NP: In 1917 Rosa Luxemburg, speaking as a socialist revolutionary, said to a fellow Jew, Don't come to me with your special Jewish sorrows. I care more about the troubles of the Indians in Putamayo than about the ghetto. Would that have been your attitude at the age of nineteen?

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SH: No, I would never have put it that way. No, I was too close to the Jews and too much aware of what they were suffering, and I was also too much aware of the fact that most of the obstacles in my life arose from the fact that I was Jewish, much more than from the fact that I was a radical.

NP: Did you yourself experience anti-Semitism?

SH: Yes. When I got my Ph.D. at Columbia with John Dewey and I was looking for a job, I was told by Woodbridge, who was then dean of the Graduate School at Columbia, that there had been seven requests for candidates for teaching positions, and that he had recommended me for them. Five were withdrawn when it was discovered that I was not Anglo-Saxon as my name implied. But you must remember that at that time, in the late 20's, philosophy was taught in departments of *religion*-and-philosophy. There were two offers: one came from someone at an experimental college in Wisconsin who admired Cohen, and the other from the University of Chicago. As for Columbia, Irwin Edman was teaching there, and he was Jewish, but he was an albino and very, very correct. And James Guttman, a Jew by name but certainly not by interests, was also a member of the philosophy department. Then there was Felix Adler of the Ethical Culture Society, who taught philosophy, and a few others in Semitic languages where some chairs had been endowed by rich German Jews.

Cohen, who wanted to teach at Columbia, always assumed that Dewey had stopped him. I once asked Dewey why Cohen wasn't at Columbia. He said *Woodbridge* had stopped him. Woodbridge was a friend of Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia, who was a friend of J.P. Morgan—Butler mixed in the highest company, and he was not exactly a philo-Semite. Gail Kennedy, a good friend of mine and a devoted follower of Dewey, told me that in 1932 or 1933, on a ship coming back from Europe, Woodbridge, who had just been at the University of Berlin, said to him, Well, you can understand why Hitler will come to power; all the department stores are owned by Jews, the professions are full of them. It wasn't a racial thing, it was social and cultural.

The only Jew Woodbridge was kind to was Ernest Nagel. Woodbridge had a passion for geometry, but he was not very good at it, and Nagel, who was the soul of patience, would work out the demonstrations for him. Of course Nagel was not yet a professor at Columbia but was teaching philosophy at City College. That was practically the only place a Jew could get a position in those days.

NP: As for you, you went to Europe.

SH: Yes, on a Guggenheim. That was in '29. But in 1927, the year I got my degree, Philip Wheelwright had an opening at Washington Square College of New York University, and he came up to J.J. Coss, a former clergyman who was secretary of the Columbia department, and he asked for help in finding someone. Coss used to say to Jewish students, Why do you want to study philosophy, why do a silly thing like that, you're not going to get a job. Now he was fearful that Dewey was going to ask for a job for me at Columbia, as he had once done for Joseph Ratner, who was also Jewish, and so Coss said, Oh, I've got just the man for you, Sidney Hook.

NP: In other words, the main reason you got an offer to teach at NYU was that the department secretary was trying to prevent Dewey from getting you a job at Columbia.

SH: Yes, although you could never prove it in court.

NP: Because you were Jewish.

SH: Oh yes, probably. But also, see, I'd had the nerve to conduct a meeting on the steps of Low Library at Columbia on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti, and J.H. Randall, who taught in the philosophy department and also believed they were innocent, said to me, that's in very bad taste. And I answered, the hell with taste, men's lives are at stake. So things conspired. But when I got to Washington Square in 1927, I was the only known Jew on the faculty. There was another, but he was passing. His name was Gamzu, a Hebrew name of some kind. He had red hair, so people didn't recognize him as a Jew, only his friends.

I'll tell you something which is testimony to the state of fraud at the time. William Phillips, one of the founding editors, later the co-editor and then the editor of *Partisan Review*, wrote in the manuscript of his autobiography that when he was a student at NYU he heard that I was able to get the appointment there only because Wheelwright had asked a Princeton friend, who was tall, blond, and Anglo-Saxon, to say he was Sidney Hook and be introduced to the dean under that name. Phillips's publisher asked me if this was true and I told him that's what people believed then, but it wasn't true.

NP: Let me move forward a little bit. In the early 30's you were not a member of the Communist party, but ideologically you were a Communist. And your book, *Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx*, came out in 1933. Hitler came to power in 1933, and you have the beginnings of anti-Semitic legislation in Germany soon thereafter. What kind of impression did the specifically anti-Semitic aspect of Hitler's program make on you as a young radical?

SH: Well, in '28 and '29 I had been in Germany on my Guggenheim, and because I spent time in Munich and went to the Nazi meetings, I had already discovered the real threat posed by Hitler to the peace of the world. I also knew all about

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Hitler's anti-Semitism, I had read *Mein Kampf*. But, to my surprise, in 1928 and '29 there was less public expression of anti-Semitism in the streets and in the air in Germany than existed in the United States, especially in New York State. When I told some of my German friends about signs at hotels in the Catskills and the Adirondacks, "No Jews Allowed," they were astounded.

The only anti-Semitism I encountered in Germany was what came out of romantic nationalism. Among the students, I met a group who were followers of Stefan George, and they were anti-Semitic because Jews were culturally foreign. But it wasn't racial; that came later. There used to be a joke: Who's responsible for Germany's troubles? Answer: The Jews and the bicycle riders. Question: What do the bicycle riders have to do with it? Answer: What do the Jews have to do with it? This was supposed to show the absurdity of the thing. Even in Bavaria, which was traditionally anti-Semitic, the only thing I heard was about peasants who didn't like doing business with Jewish cattle dealers. But the overwhelming feeling in Germany, shared from the Communists all the way through to the extreme right wing, was resentment not against Jews but against the Versailles Treaty.

NP: What about later, after the Nuremberg Laws were promulgated? I gather from what you're saying that the anti-Semitic component of the Nazi program, which you were aware of, and obviously repelled by, was nevertheless not the most salient feature for you.

SH: Neither for me nor for the whole radical movement, at least among students. Of course the Left was opposed to anti-Semitism, but it understood and used the anti-Semitism of the Nazis as evidence of the unfitness of National Socialism altogether. If the Communists took over, then anti-Semitism would disappear.

NP: Well, that leads me to another question. As a student of Marx and Marxism, were you aware of the anti-Semitic elements not just in Marx himself, but in the socialist movement? Many books have since been written about this.

SH: I was not aware of it and what has been written has been *ex post facto*. Edmund Silberner wrote about it earlier, but his was a lonely voice, addressed only to Jewish circles. The radical groups didn't read Silberner. Anyway, he went back over Marx's life and discovered that Marx personally was an anti-Semite. I was aware of that. I thought it was just a personal defect. I was also aware of Marx's terrible essay on "The Jewish Question." But I stressed the fact that Marx was treating Jews in the same way as non-Jews. His "*Der Judenfrage*" came out in English under the title, "A World Without Jews," but it should have been "A World Without Jews or Christians." Marx was consistent, he was really a fiery anti-religious. He did hold the Jews responsible for the shift in the German economy, and he believed that if the Jews had not been engaged in business or in the professions but in agriculture, things would have been different.

But the real discovery we made about anti-Semitism in connection with radicalism came later, and had to do with Stalin's anti-Jewish policies in the Soviet Union.

NP: You've said that your radical friends in the 30's thought that if the Communists took over there would be no anti-Semitism. Did you agree with that?

SH: No. I had begun to think about anti-Semitism. I came to the conclusion that anti-Semitism was not merely residual in Western society but that it was implicated in the whole Christian myth, in a culture which believes that the god it worships was killed by a group to which the concept of collective guilt was hereinafter applied. This is one of the reasons I intensified my anti-religious outlook, and began to argue that so long as you had a Christian civilization the Jews would suffer. Now, people disagreed with me and for a while I wondered whether I was wrong. They pointed out to me that there was anti-Semitism in Roman times, before Christianity, and even earlier. Well, I still believed that if you're told every Easter that Jews killed God, you're going to have a certain feeling against them.

About this time I moved back to Brooklyn. I was in Prospect Park one Easter Sunday, and after the church services people came streaming into the park. On the bench next to me there was a woman with a child, a little angelic child, maybe about five or six years old, so radiant, curls down to her shoulders. She turned to her mother and I heard her say, Mommy, I love everybody, even the Jews. And I thought, that five-year-old, what has she heard? What has she heard? And she had heard.

It was a great mistake we made, moving there. It was a pious Catholic neighborhood and my son was called a Christ-killer. One day I found him—he was about seven years old—sitting on the steps wrapped in thought, and I said, Ben, what's the matter? And he said, but how can they call me a Christ-killer? Christ was a Jew! And that's when I realized that the kids had been harassing him, making his life miserable.

So I said to myself, all right, there are many factors that enter into anti-Semitism, social, historical; besides, people just don't like foreigners. But when you bring children up with traditional Christian doctrine, even if they emancipate themselves from it, I can't believe they will ever emancipate themselves from the feeling that the Jews are deicides. I never thought that Communism would wipe *that* out—only if it wiped out religion altogether.

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NP: Speaking of children, how did you raise your own with respect to their Jewish origins?

SH: I made a terrible mistake with respect to my own kids. I sent them to the Ethical Culture Society school and tried not to influence them. I'd seen so many people indoctrinate their children and I said, I'm not going to. I didn't even talk to them about atrocities that happened in the world—not just against Jews—atrocities that made my blood run cold. So that my passion for human freedom was not communicated to them in the same way, although my son did develop it himself.

It was a great mistake not to impart all this to them, even though I don't know how I could have justified doing it, because on educational grounds I don't think one should condition children. After all, no one conditioned me and I came to my own conclusions; why couldn't my children do the same? But when it's your own children you feel differently.

NP: Would you give them a different kind of Jewish upbringing now?

SH: I would insist that the Ethical Culture Society give them more. They were told about the Jews, but they were told about the Phoenicians, too, and about the Buddhists. The Jews didn't get any special treatment.

When the Zionist educator Shlomo Bardin came from Israel we got to know him. He was involved with a school in Brooklyn, and we sent the kids there a few times, but it wasn't systematic, wasn't sustained. My daughter married an Armenian, so her children are in a wonderful position, being members of the two most persecuted minorities in the world.

NP: How many grandchildren do you have?

SH: Four. They have no Jewish consciousness.

NP: And you regret this?

SH: Very much. But I don't know how I could have done anything about it, because it would have been foreign to their experience. But you know for a while I did get interested in Jewish education. That was in the 40's when I conducted a survey and wrote a report for the National Association of Jewish Women. There I also went into great detail on my experiences with Jewish college students.

In the tenth book of Plato's *Republic*, there's the story of Er, who is left for dead on the battlefield and by mistake is transported to the Greek version of the underworld, or rather the intermediate world, where he discovers—Plato believed in reincarnation—that those who depart this world are given an opportunity, when someone else dies, to rejoin the human community and choose the kind of life they will lead. Now I used to say to my students, year after year, I want you to make out these charts. Don't sign them. On one side put down your nationality, your sex, your religion. On the other side write, if you could choose to be reborn, what selection you would make. What country do you want to be born in? What sex? What religion? And so on. And year after year, the country they wanted to be born in was the United States, nowhere else. Sex? Most of them wanted to be born with the same sex, except a few girls whose vocational ambition was engineering or physics or something. But when it came to religion, I very rarely met a Jewish student, and my students were predominantly Jewish, who wanted to be born into the Jewish religion. Many of them said, any religion that is not discriminated against. Or no religion.

Well, to me, this was a sign. What is a test of a person's happiness in life? You ask him, if you had a chance to relive your life, with all of its ambiguities and possibilities, would you accept that chance? My mother used to say that she would not want to be reborn, because the memory of the loss of her first child was so deep within her, and she had other problems and troubles. She said, No, I've had enough, I don't want to be reborn. My friend, Ernest Nagel, for other reasons, said, No, he wouldn't want to be born again. I think that's a sign of an unhappy life. I have a feeling that you, though, would take another chance at life. I would, too, and my wife would.

But here were these Jews living in a world where they didn't want to be reborn as Jews. That is perhaps the most powerful argument for Zionism. I'm sure that children born in kibbutzim have had no such problem accepting themselves.

NP: And you think this is also a good argument for Jewish education?

SH: Well, a reason for Jewish education I would stress is to be able to accept yourself as a Jew and try to build a life of dignity on that basis. That's a great difficulty many people have with my position. I'm not a religious Jew, I'm not a political Zionist, though I've been a strong believer in supporting Israel ever since it was established by the United Nations—they have the same right to their existence as any other people. I'm not a scholar in Hebrew or in Aramaic. And yet I'm a Jew and I feel that I'm a Jew.

Some people ask, What makes you a Jew? I say, a Jew is anyone who calls himself such or is called such and lives in a community which acts on the distinction between Jew and non-Jew. That's a purely nominal definition, but it's the only one that does justice to the way the term "Jew" is used throughout the world. People who've given up their Judaism are still called Jews, people who have no belief at all. A Jewish atheist, is that an oxymoron? It's not, because he's still Jewish. Well, that's my view.

I had a great debate with Rabbi Leo Jung on the existence of God. I said, It's very difficult for Jews to believe in God after the Holocaust. And

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I still remember, he bounded to the front of the podium and he said, Just listen to the man! He's blaming the Holocaust on God. That wasn't God's fault, that was Roosevelt's fault! He was referring to the fact that during the war Jews couldn't get into the country, and Roosevelt prevented them. The audience burst into applause. And I murmured, God is not stronger than Roosevelt?

NP: You've anticipated my next two questions, which concern the Holocaust and the founding of the state of Israel.

SH: On the subject of Israel I have to be perfectly frank with you. In 1931, at a meeting called by Elliot Cohen, who was then managing editor of the *Menorah Journal* and who of course later became your predecessor as editor of COMMENTARY, there was a talk by Shmarya Levin, who was a great Zionist orator. He made a very eloquent speech, in German. It's interesting that most of us understood German better than Yiddish. Well, when he got through we had a discussion. I asked a simple question about *die Araben*. I said, What about the Arabs? And Levin denounced me as a child, and later on Elliot Cohen said, What kind of question was that? I had spoiled the meeting by saying the Arabs would be a problem. But it's on the record that I felt that way, and I did feel that way until the state of Israel was proclaimed.

A lot of us used to be followers of Judah Magnes: we didn't want a state, we wanted some kind of cultural binationalism. But obviously that's a utopian notion. After the state was proclaimed, I said that there are some situations in which decisions have to be made, and this was a decision taken by the entire international community; the Soviet Union voted for it, the United States voted for it. . . . Even Morris Raphael Cohen reconciled himself to it.

NP: Did he?

SH: After a while he played his anti-Zionism down—really after Hitler came to power. I was present in the mid-30's at the organizational meeting of the Conference on Jewish Relations, with him and Salo Baron, the great Jewish historian at Columbia University. I still remember blushing with embarrassment. I said to myself then, all those meetings I have gone to for radical causes and sectarian causes, why not for Jewish causes? It was a turning point in my awareness. Cohen became interested in resisting anti-Semitism in this country, and I did, too. I took the field against Father Coughlin and also against Mortimer Adler at the University of Chicago, who at that time was converting Jewish boys to Catholicism, and I worked with the *Jewish Frontier* group and the Reconstructionists.

But the point is that when it comes to the political issue raised by Zionism, it seems to me that the problem was settled with the UN partition plan and the declaration of the state.

NP: Now, the Holocaust.

SH: Look, like everybody else, when the news of the Holocaust first came, I was skeptical. I remembered my days as a student in Boys High School during World War I. We were told that German soldiers were cutting off the hands of Belgian children, and I would deny it; I'd been reading Bertrand Russell's *Justice in Wartime*. Then after the war the British boasted that they had taken in the American public with these atrocity tales about German soldiers and pictures of factories rendering corpses into fat. And when I went to Germany in '28, where memories of the war and the inflation were still strong, I spoke to people who had fought in the German army who said that the bitterest feeling they had was when they read how they had been accused of cutting off the hands of children.

So now, when the first news came out about the death camps, I was disinclined to accept it. Then gradually it became more believable. In fact I believed it before others, because at that time I was a friend of Oskar Lange, the Polish economist, before we broke and he went back to Poland. When the war started he would bring to my office at NYU Poles who had made their way across Russia or Siberia, and who had begun to hear rumors that the Jews were being destroyed. Once it all became known, I think there should have been more public agitation. It is a scandal that the camps were not bombed. Whoever it was, Roosevelt or others, who said for strategic reasons we couldn't bomb these camps—

NP: It was John J. McCloy, who was Assistant Secretary of War.

SH: Yes, well, that's absurd. But here is a final point on which I differ with people about the Holocaust. A certain myth has grown up that the Holocaust was so unique you can't compare it with anything. But when Jewish communities used to be persecuted in the Middle Ages, when there was an *auto-da-fé*, for those people it was a holocaust. I go further. This may have been the most monstrous holocaust in human history, but I think any people are capable of conducting a holocaust. I know the polls show that there's less bigotry in relation to the Jews in this country than at any time in the past, but I'm still uncomfortable when I read about someone like Farrakhan and the huge audiences he attracts.

This may be a purely subjective reaction, but over the last two years, since the *intifada* began and Israel has had to respond with force, I think many non-Jews who have been uncomfortable about the Holocaust or felt a sort of indirect, not responsibility but a sort of involvement, now feel absolved. In fact, some of them liken what *Israel* is doing to the abominations of the Nazis. Now,

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what the hell are Jews doing in Israel as compared with that? The comparison is an infamy. But all this has made me very pessimistic about the future and reinforced my view that if conditions became desperate enough, it could happen again. I haven't dared actually say this openly, but I can even conceive of a holocaust in the United States. I'm exaggerating, but I think the Farrakhans are capable of carrying one out.

NP: Have you ever been to Israel?

SH: No. I've been invited recently, but the doctors have forbidden me to travel.

NP: But you've supported Israel since '48, and you overcame whatever residual anti-nationalist or anti-Zionist feeling you might have had. What would be your general assessment of the state of Israel now, looking back?

SH: Well, of course, I'm so much more aware of the complexities, even though I've never been a part of any Zionist group, and don't even know what they are. All I know is this, that I would never try to tell the Israelis what they should do, since it's their necks, their lives. Only if I were prepared to go to Israel and live there could I tell them wholeheartedly. It's easy to say, trade land for peace, but how much, under what conditions? What I feel in my bones, in my bones, is that the Arabs, the intransigent ones among them, will start a war as soon as they can. But you can't develop a program on the basis of what's in your bones.

NP: Why not?

SH: I'll tell you why not. Because Israel can't survive without the United States. If they lose public opinion in the United States, where else are they going to get support? The people who are running Israel have got to take into account where they're going to get support, unless their psychology is just to go down fighting. Again, I'm not sure whether . . . is this going to be published?

NP: It's up to you.

SH: Well, this part I don't want published until I'm dead. Sometimes, when I have read the history of Jewish suffering over the ages, and the indignities that Jews have endured, I've found myself thinking about the crazy Zealots at the time of the Second Temple who thought they could win against the might of the Romans. They believed, literally, that the angels would come down to fight on their side. Now what if the whole Palestinian Jewish population of that time had gone down fighting? Just think what we would have been spared, two thousand years of anti-Semitic excesses.

Well, it's a melancholy thought, that you go out in a blaze of glory. But those who say, No, survival is everything—I don't know. To me, survival is not the be-all and end-all. Under some circumstances I think it's better not to be than to be. I argued that with Bertrand Russell once. For instance, if I were confronted with the prospect of insanity, or if mankind was about to eat some bitter root which would turn it permanently insane, I'd say it's better not to be. And even the Greeks, in their tragic mood, would sometimes say that it's better never to have been born.

In short, I am very, very pessimistic about the Jewish future, especially as I read about what's happening in Chicago between blacks and Jews, or observe the student bodies in the United States shifting their loyalties and allegiances and enthusiasms from Israel to the Arabs, without any understanding of history and not regarding what took place last year or the year before, going back to '48 when the massed armies of the Arab countries tried to prevent the state from coming into being. The Arabs have now learned the advertising techniques of the West and they're dong a job in the universities which unfortunately the Jews are not combating effectively.

However, there's one consoling thought. We all have been made liars on the basis of predictions we've made in the past. You know, if someone had tried to predict in 1900 what was going to be by 1914, he might have predicted a war but not that kind of a war, and not those results, which left Germany prostrate and then so successful. Or Japan: from the ashes of empire, now an economic threat to the United States. Who could have predicted that? So let's hope that my pessimism about Israel and about the Jewish future will turn out not to be warranted by events.

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Flag-Burning & Other Modes of Expression

Walter Berns

SUMMER brought no peace to Washington. Thanks to the Supreme Court, the issue of abortion went back to the states whence it had come sixteen years earlier. But, as if in return, Washington was given patriotism and obscenity when the Court upheld the burning of the flag by an angry Gregory Johnson and when an embarrassed Corcoran Gallery cancelled an exhibition of Robert Mapplethorpe photographs.

Johnson was angry with the United States, which proved to be his salvation because, as the Court explained, the First Amendment protects angry political expression, but not, if such exists, pointless political expression: for example, flag-burning just for the fun of it. The Corcoran was embarrassed, not by the Mapplethorpe photographs themselves but by its decision to cancel the exhibition, thereby surrendering its principles to a phalanx of angry Congressmen led by "the unspeakable [Senator] Jesse Helms," as he was called by the Washington *Post*, "America's Number One Yahoo." After all, the Corcoran is an *art* gallery and Robert Mapplethorpe was an artist, and it follows—at least in the art world it follows—that everything done by an artist is art. Art, like angry flag-burning, is one of the modes of expression, and expression is said to be protected by the First Amendment.

According to Robert McCormick Adams, the head of the Smithsonian Institution, even graffiti are (or is) art. Including, we are entitled to ask, even graffiti spray-painted on the exterior walls of one of the Washington museums entrusted to his care—for example, the National Gallery's East Wing of which he is a trustee? After all, by definition graffiti are words or pictures scratched or painted on a public surface, and the East Wing provides public surfaces much grander, cleaner, and, one would think, much more inviting than any available in New York City subways. So grand, in fact, and so clean, that one wonders why no one has yet taken advantage of them. (Perhaps we can thank the corps of dogs employed by the Smithsonian to police its grounds and buildings.) Still, notoriety awaits the first to do so, just as notoriety, of a sort, was won by the anonymous New York subway "graffitists" when, with the help of a grant in the amount of some $160,000 from the National Endowment for the Arts ("Your Tax Dollars at Work!"), a film was made depicting their work, and not only depicting but celebrating it.

Rather than celebrate it, Adams would surely call the police, the FBI, or the U.S. Attorney's office, if someone were to spray graffiti on any of the Smithsonian buildings. Graffiti may be an art, and art may be a form of expression, and expression may be protected by the First Amendment, but surely, he would protest, there are limits. He might cite a few Supreme Court decisions having to do with time, place, and manner. At a minimum, we would expect him to be outraged; but outrage was all Jesse Helms was expressing—at least initially. He thought it outrageous that public money, like public surfaces, should be made available to the likes of Robert Mapplethorpe.

One doesn't have to be a "Yahoo" to agree with Helms on this point. Like Gregory Johnson, Mapplethorpe was undoubtedly expressing himself; indeed, unlike Johnson, he was expressing himself in the etymologically precise sense of the term. According to the unabridged Oxford English Dictionary, expression originally meant "the act of pressing or squeezing out," hence "to expel or get rid of by force." Just so, in one of his photographs Mapplethorpe shows one man artfully urinating into the mouth of another, expelling urine by force of the sphincters, so to speak (or so to express). In another of his photographs he also shows a bullwhip thrust, handle first, into a man's anus. As a Washington *Post* writer explained, Mapplethorpe "set out to celebrate this domain of sexual experience, to elevate it, even, to a transcendent level." It was their failure to appreciate this higher purpose that caused the *Post* to be indignant with Jesse Helms and his "Yahoo" colleagues in the Congress who threatened to cut off funding. Expression, the *Post* insisted, even apparently shocking expression, is protected by the First Amendment. (In its own expression of indignation, the *Post* reproduced a

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Mapplethorpe photograph of a couple of tulips and, a week or so later, a Mapplethorpe self-portrait—of his face—but, for some reason, it never got around to reproducing what the art critic Hilton Kramer, writing in the New York *Times*, referred to as "those disputed pictures.")

IN FACT, of course, the First Amendment protects not freedom of expression but freedom of speech. "Congress shall make no law," it reads, "abridging the freedom of speech." But, it might be asked, what is expression if not one of the forms of speech? Indeed, to refer again to the dictionary, the word soon acquired the meaning familiar to us, "the utterance of feelings." Besides, in our postmodernist world, speech and expression are easily confused and just as easily identified. In his massive and widely acclaimed book, *The Study of Freedom of Expression*, for example, Thomas I. Emerson of the Yale Law School, no doubt inadvertently, removed the word "speech" from the First Amendment and put in its place the word "expression." In construing specific legal doctrines which govern concrete issues, he wrote, "the main function of the courts is . . . to define the key elements in the First Amendment: 'expression,' 'abridge,' and 'law.' "

It would be foolish, however, to insist on this distinction between speech and expression when confronting the issue of censorship of the arts. Whatever the authors of the First Amendment intended by choosing the word "speech," there are sound practical reasons for the law to leave the arts alone. Even assuming that not everything carrying the label is, in fact, art, the courts are unable, and have proved themselves unable, to make the aesthetic judgments necessary to mark the distinction. And since the kind of restrictions proposed by Jesse Helms* would inevitably end up in the courts, it would be best to forget about dealing with the problem through legislation.

Thus, for example, Helms, like the legendary Anthony Comstock, would draw the line between art and obscenity, but many a work of art, and many a literary masterpiece, is obscene. Aristophanes' *Assembly of Women* is so obscene that the English translator of the play preferred to remain anonymous. (That was a long time ago.) Hilton Kramer finds it noteworthy that Manet's painting, "*Déjeuner sur l'herbe*," now one of the Louvre's "treasured classics," was considered indecent when first exhibited in 1863. But treasured classic or not, it *is* indecent; no one, however, not even Jesse Helms, I suspect, would say that about the painting that inspired it, Giorgione's *Concert Champêtre*. The two paintings—each of them a masterpiece—are both strikingly similar and dissimilar, but what distinguishes them cannot, I think, be expressed in any category known to the law.

Manet, the greatest of the French Impressionists, shows a woman without a stitch of clothes on, and in the background another partially clothed woman, the two of them sharing a picnic lunch with two fully clothed men. Giorgione, some 350 years earlier, shows two women, without a stitch of clothes on, also in the company of two men who are fully clothed. But Manet's women are undressed; he shows their clothes in a heap. Giorgione's are simply nude; their clothes are nowhere to be seen. Manet's women are playful, even wanton, as if it is no big deal, as we would say, for women to undress before men in a public park (a sort of miniature Woodstock festival). Giorgione's women appear serene, even noble; one of them is holding a pitcher and pouring water from it *into* a well. Manet's men look bored; sharing a picnic lunch with undressed women would appear to be something they do every day. Giorgione's men are innocent and appear to be engaged in serious musical conversation. Nothing indecent is being depicted here; as is evident to someone who knows how to look at this picture, the young men cannot see the women because the women, like Oberon in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are invisible, not to us but to them. The women are not human; they are woodland nymphs who, attracted by the music and charm of the young men, have joined in their pastoral concert, their *Concert Champêtre*.

There is no reason to believe that a judge cannot be taught to see this—I myself learned it from an art critic, Philipp Fehl—but there is also no reason to believe that a judge could state the difference between the two paintings (or, more to the point, between Manet and Mapplethorpe) in a rule of law. When required to make such distinctions, judges are inclined to mutter something about "redeeming social value" (and find it in *Fanny Hill*, the highly explicit life story of a whore), or to throw up their hands and say, with the late Justice John Marshall Harlan, "one man's vulgarity is another's lyric." This was said in 1971 for a divided Supreme Court, but it is a foolish statement at best, and at worst it is pernicious. For if Harlan is right, there is no such thing as vulgarity (and therefore no reason to censor), but, by the same token, there is also no such thing as art (and therefore no reason *not* to censor).

Better, as I say, for the law to leave the arts alone. Better for society to express its disapproval of a Robert Mapplethorpe by simply refusing to fund his work. Presumably—although, goodness knows, there is reason to doubt it—the National Endowment for the Arts, unlike the courts, can

* A Helms amendment would bar federal arts money from being used to "promote, disseminate, or produce obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion."

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do this without a Helms amendment and without jeopardizing the work of Giorgione or Manet.

Political expression is another matter, but unfortunately, our judges hardly do much better in that area. The Illinois Supreme Court even quoted Harlan's aphorism in the Skokie case, thereby implying that what went for the brandishing of four-letter words in a courthouse (the issue in Harlan's case) applied equally well to an invasion of Nazis brandishing their swastikas in a community of Holocaust survivors.

This sort of moral relativism is a feature of our First Amendment law: distinctions, whether between the art of the tulip and the art of the anus, or between flag-burning and sober political speech, *are not to be made because, so it is* thought, they cannot be made except arbitrarily. Just as beauty is in the eye of the beholder, so truth is relative, a proposition that found its way into our law through the good offices of two of our most famous 20th-century Supreme Court justices, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Hugo L. Black. If, said Holmes in 1925, "the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way." So, too, Black in 1961: "Education and contrary argument [may provide an adequate defense against Communist and fascist speech, but if that] remedy is not sufficient, the only meaning of free speech must be that the revolutionary ideas will be allowed to prevail." In other words, it is worse to punish the advocacy of Stalinism or Hitlerism than it is to be ruled by Stalin or Hitler.

According to the historian Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., relativism is the peculiar American virtue; everyone we admire—not only Holmes but Learned Hand, Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, Reinhold Niebuhr, even (astonishingly enough) Abraham Lincoln—in fact, everyone except Allan Bloom and, presumably, the "Yahoos" represented by "the unspeakable Jesse Helms"—was or is a relativist. Relativism, Schlesinger says, "*is what America is all about.*"

It was, of course, otherwise at our beginning. John Locke was the first to teach us the importance, not of speech—Aristotle did that—but of freedom of speech, by which he meant freedom of religious speech, or liberty of conscience. Locke, writing in the 17th century, aimed this doctrine at the clergy (for example, the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud) who, with the support of the government (for example, King Charles I), used *their* speech to instruct people in the proper care of their souls and threatened to punish anyone who disobeyed. The consequence, especially in Locke's own time, was civil war and revolution. Locke taught, and succeeded in teaching Thomas Jefferson and the other American Founders, that "the care of each man's soul belongs unto himself alone," and that "liberty of conscience is every man's natural right." Government is instituted to secure that right, which means, so far as government is concerned, that there is no right way to care for souls and that all religious speech is equal. As Jefferson put it, "It does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." In fact, he added, "difference of opinion is advantageous in religion."

Advantageous in religion and, as he said elsewhere, harmless in physics and geometry; but he never said that, or anything resembling it, with respect to political speech. On that subject, and unlike Schlesinger, he and the other Founders were not relativists. As they saw it, we might lack knowledge concerning the right way to care for souls, but we had firm knowledge concerning the fundamental principles of government: we knew that governments were instituted to secure rights, and that they derived their just powers from the consent of the governed. If this were merely an opinion rather than a "self-evident" truth—if, that is, it were a matter on which men might rightly disagree—it would be impossible to protect the right of freedom of conscience. For then the opinion that government must instruct men on the care of their souls would be equal to the opinion that the care of each man's soul belongs to himself alone, and the issue could not be decided (and, in the Britain of Locke's time, was not decided) other than by force of arms.

Thus, at our beginning, there was understood to be a difference between religious and other kinds of speech, which is why the First Amendment distinguishes them. With respect to religion we were to be a house divided, and the Constitution was designed to keep us divided. With respect to the fundamental principles of government we were to be a house united, and the Constitution was designed to keep us united: "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government" (Article IV, Section 4).

Fulfilling this mandate is not an easy matter. Republican government is representative government, but in the words of James Madison, the people to be represented are by no means united; in fact, they are divided into "factions," the causes of which are "sown in the nature of man." By nature, men are selfish, each of them moved by "self-love"; and while they are endowed by nature with the same rights, they are also endowed by nature with different and unequal faculties. The consequence is that they have different interests. Republican government must bring these naturally self-interested persons together to form a whole while also respecting the diversity of their interests and, at the same time,

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securing their right to have different interests. Not, to repeat, an easy thing to do.

The Founders' solution was representative government based on the consent of the people. Such a government must, first of all, represent the diversity of interests in the society. Therefore the First Amendment guarantees that each person has a voice in the selection of the representatives who make the laws and form the policy. Stated otherwise, each member of the society registers his consent by debating, organizing, and then choosing his representatives. Freedom of speech plays an essential part in this process.

Secondly, such a government must make it possible for agreements to be reached with respect to the policies adopted in the laws and otherwise pursued. To do this, it must gain the consent of these representatives, or at least a majority of them, each of whom has a right to withhold it. This, too, requires speech, but speech of a certain kind, which is why every representative assembly has rules governing the manner of debate. Kings may speak haughtily and tyrants cruelly, insultingly, or even contemptuously, but the members of a republican assembly must adopt a mode of address that reflects a disposition to respect the interests of others because, as a matter of constitutional right, they are equally respectable. The speech of political representatives will be self-interested speech, of course, but it will be speech that recognizes the difference between self-interest and the common interest and the necessity to agree on a common interest. And given the fact that men are divided by their interests (which derive from their self-love and different faculties), the common interest here takes the form of an aggregation of partially satisfied self-interests.

Gregory Johnson wants no part of this. On the contrary, he has nothing but contempt for the flag and "the republic for which it stands." To adopt the locution of the day, he is "into" self-expression, and as Harvard's Harvey Mansfield has reminded us, there is nothing in self-expression that requires or encourages one "self" to seek the consent of another. Self-expression is almost always angry expression, and anger provokes anger, as it did in this instance, not agreement or accommodation.

The reason self-expression is almost always angry is that it is self-assertion. According to Nietzsche (the founding father of self-expression and the man from whom all this derives), the "self" lacks innate definition; it acquires identity, or "authenticity," only by assertion against others.

In this sense, the "self" is a neologism; we speak of "selfs" where our fathers, or at least our Founding Fathers, spoke of souls, and the difference is decisive. "The soul may be responsible for its being good or bad," as Leo Strauss wrote some twenty years ago when addressing a somewhat similar issue, "but it is not responsible for its being a soul." Rather, the soul is (or was) understood to be part of an order for which God was responsible. But in Nietzsche's words, "God is dead," and with His death went the ordered universe of which the soul was a part. "Nature's God," the God of the Declaration of Independence, is also dead, and with His death went the laws and rights of nature, because, lacking definition, the "self" is governed by no moral laws and is incapable of having rights.

This means that constitutionalism is also dead, an event announced in a recent book by Sanford Levinson of the University of Texas Law School. "The death of 'constitutionalism,' " he declares, "may be the central event of our time, just as the death of God was that of the past century (and for much the same reason.)" Nature's God endowed us with rights and, through the agency of the Founders, provided us with a Constitution that, in order to secure these rights, put constraints on the popular will. With His death, those constraints are deprived of all moral authority. In Levinson's words, "law is stripped of any moral anchoring," with the consequence that there is nothing "to which the will [is] bound to submit." No moral order, no moral laws, and, as Nietzsche said, no reason to be burdened by guilt.

The "self" exists in this void; it is merely will; it becomes what it is only by asserting—in Nietzsche's formulation—"the will to power," and the strongest will must prevail. This prospect does not frighten Levinson: "Political institutions," he says, "thus become the forum for the triumph of the will," the phrase first uttered by Hitler's minister of propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and rendered memorable (appallingly so, one would have thought) by Hitler's favorite film-maker, Leni Riefenstahl, in *The Triumph of the Will.* When it comes to "self-expression," no one has yet been able to top Adolf Hitler. On the other hand, considering the condition of our legal and political thought—Levinson claims his view of our situation is held by "most major law schools"—there is no guarantee that someone might not yet succeed in doing so.

ALL this should serve to convince us that the Supreme Court was ill-advised to treat flag-burning as unimportant. The flag is the symbol of what we think about ourselves, and what we think we are about, much more so than the presidential seal, to adopt Justice William Brennan's silly analogy. As Judge Robert Bork said after reading Brennan's opinion for the Court in this case, no one, save perhaps the members of the White House staff, salutes the presidential seal. Nor, unlike the case with the flag, does the U.S. Code devote page after page prescribing when and where it should be displayed—"The flag should be displayed during school days in or near every schoolhouse"—or how it should be displayed, or how it should be folded and disposed of, or how and when it should

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be saluted. Nor, again unlike the case with the flag, does the Code make it a federal offense to "desecrate" the presidential seal. Like the American people, Congress has always looked upon the flag as something special. Why then is the Supreme Court unable to draw a line in favor of the flag and against its desecration?

The Court's answer is that the First Amendment forbids the drawing of such a line. Writing for the five-judge majority, Brennan said that "if there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the goverment may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because it finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable." But surely it is possible to distinguish between an idea and the manner in which it is expressed. Judges may not be able to devise a rule of law marking the difference between Manet and Mapplethorpe, but it is not beyond their capacity as jurists to distinguish between speech and at least some forms of expression or, for that matter, among the various kinds of speech. Libelous speech is not protected by the First Amendment, nor are "fighting words," perjury, false advertising, verbal agreements to restrain trade, or vulgar speech in a student assembly, or contemptuous speech in a courtroom. The list is not endless but it is long, and commodious enough to include flag-burning.

Within these limits, Gregory Johnson can *say* whatever he wants to say; that is the "bedrock principle." He can with impunity denounce Ronald Reagan and George Bush and call down a plague on the Republican party; he can hurl his imprecations against the United States and the American people; he can scream his disgust with life in the 20th century. He can also make a fool of himself by burning the presidential seal—no law forbids it—but he should not be permitted to *do* whatever he wants to do by way of expressing his "self."

Of course, deprived now of flag-burning—because it is no longer illegal—Johnson and his friends will have to find new and, of necessity, more egregious ways to aggress against the symbols, the conventions, or the mores which, as Tocqueville argued, provide the foundation of America's laws and its political life. For this they might find inspiration in some of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs, which may explain why Johnson immediately flew to Washington in order to be among the first to visit the private gallery exhibiting them.

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The Politics of 1992

George Szamuely

About a year ago, Margaret Thatcher went to the College of Europe in Bruges to deliver a skeptical address about developments within the European Economic Community (EEC). Having, she declared, rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, she did not want "to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels." She went on to ridicule the "utopian goals" of the European Commission (EC)—the body entrusted with the preparation, proposal, and execution of new laws and policies for the Community. And she concluded with a call for "a Europe which plays its full part in the wider world, which looks outward not inward, and which preserves that Atlantic community—that Europe on both sides of the Atlantic—which is our noblest inheritance and our greatest strength."

Mrs. Thatcher's words received scant attention in the United States, and that is a pity. The 1992 presidential election here will take place just a few weeks before the deadline that the European Commission has set for the fall of the last of the non-tariff trade barriers among member-countries of the Community. Given the current American preoccupation with unfair trading practices, whether they be those of Japan, Brazil, or India, there is bound to be much discussion in that year's election campaign about the way American high technology is being kept out of the European market; but the enormous *political* implications raised by Mrs. Thatcher's speech, which are more important by far, will very likely be ignored.

There is nothing inherently disastrous about removing non-tariff trade barriers. To the contrary—by 1992, thirty-five years will have passed since the signing of the Treaty of Rome which set up the EEC as an open marketplace, and the current proposals are no more than a somewhat belated implementation of that agreement. Indeed, Mrs. Thatcher herself has expressed no objections to the 1992 project as such.

Nor is the issue simply one of the likely consequences for American business of the various devices now being introduced precisely in order to keep that business out of Europe. Industrialists from around the country have already been complaining on Capitol Hill about the secretiveness with which Europeans are setting about harmonizing their technical and safety standards, about the onerousness of the new testing and certification regulations, about the local-content and rules-of-origin restrictions that will apply in government procurement preferences, and about the imposition of import and anti-dumping duties. No doubt these businessmen are right to complain, and they will probably succeed in squeezing some concessions out of the Europeans in the inevitably acrimonious battles that are going to take place in the current ("Uruguay") round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations.

But what will make the U.S. dispute with post-1992 Europe different from the dispute with Japan, say, or South Korea, is that it will result from a clash of political, not economic, interests. Proof of this can be found in the wave of "Euromania"—inseparable, often, from its better-known relative, "Gorbomania"—now sweeping the Western half of the continent. This movement unites the most disparate elements.

On the one hand, there are the spokesmen for the corporate boardrooms as well as the European bureaucrats ensconced in Brussels, who proclaim in ever more apocalyptic terms that the proposed single market is the continent's last chance in an economic war of survival with the United States and Japan. It is not enough, they say, for the internal trade barriers to disappear; urgent measures must be adopted to ensure collaboration among European multinationals to undertake a full-scale restructuring and rationalization of industry in order to create gigantic Euro-firms churning out mass Euro-goods, and, in short, to do whatever is necessary to enable Europe's high-technology industries to take on their rivals. Corporatism on the national level is thus to be replaced by corporatism on the supranational level.

On the other and ultimately more significant hand, there is the European Left, which in recent years has evinced a no less remarkable enthusiasm for the European Community. The program of the Italian Communist party, for instance, urges strongly that the Community cease to be a mere

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economic organization and become a "political entity" with "real elements of supranationalism." The British Labor party, which actually fought the 1983 general election promising immediate withdrawal from the Community, now waxes lyrical about its virtues.

It is not hard to see why. As a result of the Single European Act, which the twelve member-nations signed in 1985 and which came into force in 1987, the powers of the common European institutions are greatly enhanced vis-à-vis individual sovereign governments. The Act has aggrandized the power of the European Commission, while that of the Council of Ministers, for years the symbol of de Gaulle's *l'Europe des patries,* in which individual governments could veto a proposed piece of legislation, has correspondingly declined.

Under Jacques Delors, the former French Socialist Finance Minister, the Commission has taken it upon itself to push through the kind of agenda that most Europeans have been rejecting in recent national elections. In the offing, for example, are measures designed to strengthen labor unions at the expense of management. So-called "common social policies" are also now being worked out whereby the poorer, lower-wage countries of the Community will be compelled to undertake much more costly social programs (in order to protect the highly trade-unionized industries located mainly in the wealthier northern half from "unfair" competition).

On top of all this, the Single European Act has increased the powers of the European Assembly in Strasbourg. Even before the elections to that body in June, the combined forces of European political conservatism held the slenderest of majorities over the Left in the Strasbourg Assembly; now that edge has disappeared, with the socialists and the Greens, together with the Communists, emerging as a voting bloc capable of pushing through an amalgam of an Old Left/New Left agenda.

II

The Single European Act of 1985 committed its signatories to pursue three goals. The first was the "European union." The second was the "social dimension." And the third was "European external identity."

"European union" has clearly meant different things at different times ever since the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950. In its present usage it refers to the project of establishing, by 1992, a single gigantic internal market of 320 million consumers. The impulse behind it, however, has much less to do with a commitment to free enterprise—otherwise, Mrs. Thatcher would hardly be protesting so much—as with a determination to turn the Community into a trading bloc rivaling the Americans and the Japanese.

The "social dimension," as spelled out by Jacques Delors, is simple *dirigisme,* and it will presumably culminate in his stated goal of ensuring that within ten years, 80 percent of the economic, tax, and social legislation of individual member countries will be decided in Brussels.

As for "European external identity," it is daily becoming clearer how, and against whom, Western Europeans intend to define themselves. Gone from public life in Europe are those symbols which once gave expression to the shared experiences, memories, and sense of purpose that held the West together. The Berlin airlift, the Marshall Plan, the creation of NATO, the defeat of the Communist challenge in France and Italy have been replaced in the European mind by the battle over the Euromissiles, the squabbling over the Soviet gas-pipeline deal, or sanctions against Poland. Today, to many among Europe's post-Vietnam generation, America is an aging, nagging relative, living off old memories and out of touch with the modern world. That modern world is, of course, represented by Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev.

Here we come to perhaps the most important contributing factor to the shaping of a "European external identity." Indeed, the Soviet leader's book, *Perestroika,* might almost have been intended as bedtime reading for Jacques Delors's new European man. In that book Gorbachev complains, for instance, about the "onslaught of 'mass culture' from across the Atlantic"; he worries that the "profoundly intelligent and inherently humane European culture is retreating to the background before the primitive revelry of violence and pornography and the flood of cheap feelings and low thoughts"; he hopes for the "better use of the aggregate potential of Europe for the benefit of its peoples, and in relations with the rest of the world"; and he invokes constantly his well-known theme of a "common European home."

When it comes to specific suggestions, Gorbachev seems, again, to be addressing himself to precisely those economic fears which brought the 1992 project into being. He calls for "research in the fields of superconductivity and biotechnology," for "utilizing thermonuclear energy," for the "joint exploration . . . of outer space." He cites with approval "Giulio Andreotti's idea of a 'world laboratory'" (whatever that may mean). And he offers Soviet help in the West European campaign to keep up with American high technology. Human and natural resources, and gigantic industrial plants, are to be made available to Europe's scientists; all the Europeans have to provide is the research. Farther down the line, there is the tantalizing prospect of the Soviet and East European markets.

A Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic would comprise a market not of 320 million consumers, but of 820 million. It would account for some-

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thing like 49 percent of the world's GNP (as against the United States's 29 percent). Is it reasonable to expect, in this era of new thinking, common policies, shared programs, and restructuring, that the European Community would reject such an offer out of hand, particularly when it comes with an added incentive? That incentive, of course, is the prospect of drastically reduced defense expenditures.

III

The upshot is that in 1993 or shortly thereafter the United States will likely be confronted with a corporatist socialist Europe—a Europe intricately involved in joint ventures, loans, and special projects with the Soviet bloc, and a Europe with which the U.S. will not be on especially good terms. Nor will Americans be in a position to complain. For it was the U.S. that did more than even the Europeans themselves to create the European Community.

Two aims were being pursued here—the preservation of the Western alliance, and the achievement of European unity. At first these appeared to be mutually reinforcing goals. To preserve the alliance, there was the integrated military command of NATO, with its headquarters first in Paris and then in Brussels, with its Supreme Commander who was always an American and its Secretary-General who was always a European. And to work for European unity—the only possible aim, so the argument went, for a continent torn apart by a half-century of wars among rival nation states—there was that series of first steps, the Coal and Steel Community (1950), the European Economic Community (1957), and the European Atomic Energy Commission (1957). These were to lead to a new political federation—the United States of Europe—which would in turn provide the necessary underpinning for the military hardware of NATO.

There was something in this for everyone. For the defeated Axis powers, European unity meant an extraordinarily speedy return to international respectability. For small, weak states like the Benelux countries, it meant an end to their existence as mere playthings of the great powers. A sovereign Western Europe, disposing of its own armed forces, independent of yet closely allied to the United States, would form a powerful counterweight to the expansionist drive of the Soviet Union, contributing to the policy of containment and leading to the inevitable dissolution of Communism. And in the meantime the United States could begin to reduce its military expenditures in Europe in the confident expectation that this new entity would be more than happy to take up the slack.

Such great enthusiasts of European unification were the Americans that to the reservations of some, like the British, about ceding sovereignty to a group of countries that had far more in common with one another than any of them had with the British or with the Americans, Washington turned a deaf ear. In his memoirs, Harry Truman's Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, summed up the American attitude most succinctly:

> Continuance of American interest and effort in Europe . . . depended on the continuance in Europe of policies designed to create a community united politically and strong economically and militarily. . . .

In the Eisenhower administration, enthusiasm reached extraordinary levels, with the Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, claiming that "it would actually be a healthy thing for these nations to try to mold themselves into a Third Force." Eisenhower himself announced that "European nations must learn the biblical concept that to save their lives they must lose them."

Over the following years American support continued apace, despite frictions with the Europeans over Algeria, Suez, Indochina, the Congo, and nuclear strategy. Under Secretary of State George Ball, speaking on behalf of the Kennedy administration, argued that

> As long as Europe remained fragmented, as long as it consisted merely of nations small by modern standards, the potentials for true partnership were always limited. . . . We have wanted a Europe united and strong that could serve as an equal partner in the achievement of our common endeavors.

In the furtherance of that partnership the Americans were willing to overlook certain things even when it was not in their interest to do so. Thus, when the Europeans associated their former colonies with the EEC, thereby creating preferential trading systems and violating the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the British protested, the Americans did not.

It was only with the advent of the Nixon administration that a change in American attitudes could be discerned. What provoked it was not just de Gaulle's continuing attacks on U.S. foreign policy from Vietnam to Latin America, or his withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command. There was something more ominous at work. Then, as now, Europeans were convinced that they were being "colonized" by the United States, and in particular by the American multinationals. Consequently, when de Gaulle began to exchange France's dollar reserves for gold, thereby hoping to force a devaluation of the dollar and make American investment in Europe that much more difficult, he was cheered from all sides. The European Left approved a move that seemed directed against the "multinationals"; the Right applauded a blow at the "Americanization of Europe"; the corporatists were happy that foreign

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enterprises were being prevented from interfering with national economic plans.

In 1969 Maurice Stans, Nixon's Secretary of Commerce, delared an intention to "mount a full-scale counterattack" on EEC non-tariff trade barriers. The following year, decrying Europe's attitude to the "economic problems and the political and military burdens carried by the U.S.," the American ambassador to the EEC spoke in terms of "irritation, frustration, and a brooding sense of apprehension." The White House economic-policy adviser, Francis Bator, said there was no "way to avoid an economic cold war between a growing EEC and ourselves." For the first time it seemed that the European Community, far from being a pillar of the Atlantic alliance, might be on its way to becoming a battering ram for breaking it up.

Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, was one of the first to perceive the coming dangers. As he later wrote in his memoirs:

> We were essentially agnostic about how and when political cohesion came about, provided it did not seek its identity in opposing us. And yet that is precisely the concept of European unity that was gaining ground. Those European leaders most dedicated to European unity were beginning to perceive a conflict between Atlantic unity and European identity. European unification was absorbing more of their energies and dedication than was the elaboration of Atlantic institutions.

IV

TODAY, twenty years later, Kissinger's apprehensions are being borne out in plain view. Worse yet, the internal political dynamics in almost every EC-member country are leading it away from Atlanticism.

West Germany—the motor of the Community, accounting for 26 percent of its GNP—is undergoing political turmoil. Current polls put the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens ahead of the Christian Democrats (CDU), the Christian Social Union (CSU), and the Free Democrats (FDP). Moreover, even if the Germans balk at the prospect of being governed by a "Red-Green" coalition, the Social Democrats could well return to power following the 1990 elections if, as seems increasingly likely, Hans-Dietrich Genscher's Free Democrats desert Chancellor Kohl's coalition. An SPD-FDP government led probably by Oskar Lafontaine—a politician who came to national prominence in the early 1980's as an ardent foe of NATO and nuclear power—would be a far cry from the days when the SPD used to be led by Helmut Schmidt. Today's SPD is fanatically anti-nuclear and also maintains close interparty links with the Communist parties of Eastern Europe. In any case, disillusionment with Atlanticism is rampant through all sectors of the population. German crowds mobbed Gorbachev during his visit while President Bush was berated by government officials over the issue of low-flying NATO aircraft. The brief twenty-year interlude of *Westpolitik* is now definitely at an end, its place taken by *Drang nach Osten*.

Meanwhile the French are pushing the post-1992 Community in a corporatist-socialist direction. In general, the 1992 project is largely a French brainchild, having come about as a result of Mitterrand's doomed 1981-83 experiment with "socialism in one country." But the lesson the French President drew from those two disastrous years was not that the market should determine the allocation of capital and goods, but that for socialism to succeed it has to be implemented on a Europe-wide scale. Jacques Delors, the Finance Minister during those turbulent times, expresses the egalitarian side of it with his "social dimension" and "fundamental charter of social rights," while Laurent Fabius, who as Prime Minister from 1984 to 1986 inaugurated the French public rhetoric of computers, videodiscs, and the "Silicon Valley spirit" and who headed the French list in June's elections to the European parliament, represents the corporatist side.

What remains unclear is what will happen in Britain. Over the last twelve months Margaret Thatcher vigorously led the fight against the Delors regime in Brussels. Yet her own party is divided on the issue; indeed, much of the British political establishment is, and has always been, passionately Europhile and has thus taken a dim view of her recent activities. Moreover, she received a rebuff at the hands of the electorate in the June elections when Labor came back strong.

Even if Mrs. Thatcher has been uncompromising on introducing socialism by the back door in Europe, she has sounded an uncertain note on Gorbachev. At times, the Prime Minister has praised the Soviet leader fulsomely, going so far as to declare the cold war at an end. At other times, she has warned her countrymen and other Europeans not to be taken in by the siren song from the East. Such inconsistency can lead to trouble, as became evident during the run-up to the NATO summit, when her strong line on the modernization of tactical nuclear missiles elicited little support either among her European counterparts or at home.

Still, Mrs. Thatcher's stand is for the moment the only obstacle to the corporatist-protectionist regime in Brussels, as well as to the neo-socialist agenda enshrined in the European Social Charter. Whether she will be helped by the United States is a crucial question which unfortunately remains open—though President Bush's recent expressions of enthusiam for European unity, as well as his downgrading of the special relationship with Britain that characterized the Reagan years, are not very reassuring.

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The Goldin Boys

A Story

Joseph Epstein

EVEN though the coffin was closed, I couldn't bring myself to walk in front of it and greet the Goldin family in condolence. I thought about it on the drive over to the Piser Funeral Home, but given the circumstances of Buddy Goldin's death, I could think of nothing condoling to say. I signed the visitors' book on my way in, so that, in a week or so, the family would see that Dr. Philip Hirsh had been among the mourners, but that was the best I could do.

I took a seat twenty or so rows behind the family—Buddy's parents, his wife who was still in her thirties, his two young daughters. Staring at their backs, I considered how sorrow destroyed posture. Sid Goldin wore his *yarmulke* at an odd angle at the back of his head, and his expensive suit seemed, in his grief, a poor fit, riding up on his shoulders. Jean Goldin seemed to have shrunk with age and the year-round suntan that she always had now gave her a leathery look that came across as hard and unsympathetic. Sid and Jean Goldin, whom life seemed so singularly to have favored, now drew this most bitter of life's cards: the death of a son as they were approaching old age.

The rabbi, a small man a little too pleased with his powers of enunciation, was sermonizing not very convincingly upon the mercifulness of death. He referred to Buddy, whom he had pretty clearly never met, as Bernard, with a strong accent on the second syllable, which made it feel as if those of us who were Buddy's old friends had never met the man the rabbi was talking about, either. Of course, at no point during this sermon, or during the entire service, did he mention that Buddy Goldin was a suicide.

The other item that went unmentioned in the rabbi's sermon was the absence of Buddy's twin brother Eddie. Twins though they were, Buddy and Eddie Goldin were very different in temperament and, even though unmistakably brothers, also in looks. Both were dark, but Buddy's hair was straight and Eddie's curly. Buddy, at 6'2", grew to be two inches taller than Eddie, who was stockier, more muscular than his brother. As kids, Buddy had had bad skin and Eddie a chipped front tooth (later capped). Buddy always seemed cool and a little detached, while Eddie was hot-tempered, a battler. Yet they always got on well together, at least as far as anyone knew. I never saw them argue, or heard either brother ever say anything against the other—and I used to see a lot of them. Their junior year in high school their father bought them a two-tone Oldsmobile convertible—a Starfire, I think it was called—with a dramatic red and white paint job and leather seats, and they shared the car without argument or any kind of quibbling whatsoever.

I knew that there had been a serious falling out between Eddie Goldin and his parents, and that Eddie had broken with them. He was variously reported as teaching in Thailand, Taiwan, or Zimbabwe—nobody seemed to know for sure. Nor was it clear if he even knew about Buddy's leap from his twenty-third-floor law office at One North LaSalle two days before, late on a sunny Tuesday afternoon. My own guess is that, had he known, despite his trouble with his parents, Eddie would have managed to be here.

I went to grammar school with the Goldin boys at Daniel Boone School, in West Rogers Park, and afterward the three of us were the only kids from Boone to cross the line at Howard Street separating Chicago from Evanston and go to Evanston Township High School. Buddy and Eddie Goldin were sent to Evanston because they had already established themselves as extraordinary athletes and E.T.H.S. offered coaching of a kind not available in the Chicago public high schools. My father, who was a pharmacist, sent me to E.T.H.S. because he was intent on my becoming the physician—which I am today, an internist—that he would have been had the Depression not intervened. It cost six hundred bucks a year in those days to send a kid from Chicago to E.T.H.S. I knew this represented a serious expenditure for my father, who ran his drugstore on Devon Avenue with a careful eye for small economies. Even now I can remember him carting the bundles of newspapers into the store at seven on deathly cold Chicago winter mornings. For the Goldins the extra twelve hundred to send both their sons to

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high school was of no real concern. Money, for them, was never a problem.

We lived in a six-flat building on Washtenaw Avenue, less than a block from the drugstore, which made it easier for my father to open at seven o'clock seven mornings a week and close at nine-thirty every night but Sunday, when he closed at five, and still be able to slip home for a half-hour at lunch and a full hour or so at dinner. We ate in the kitchen, except for Friday night and Jewish holidays. I had my own bedroom and so did my sister Sheila, who is two years older than I, and so of course did our parents. We all shared one bathroom. We had in our living room, among other furniture, a white couch covered in plastic; we went into the living room only when we had company, which, given my father's work schedule, was rarely.

The Goldins lived only six or seven blocks away, on Lunt, between Francisco and Sacramento, but in what seemed to me another world. Theirs was an eleven-room house, built since the war, red face brick all the way around, with two large bay windows and a connected garage, set out on a triple lot. A crew of Mexicans took care of the lawns and shrubbery. A black woman named Jessie, who lived in a maid's room off the kitchen, did the cooking, and did it extremely well. The double garage held Sid Goldin's blue Fleetwood and his wife's cream-colored Chrysler Town & Country convertible with wood paneling on the sides. Along the inside walls of the garage were golf bags with pastel-colored covers for the woods, tennis and badminton racquets, an archery target, and other sports equipment, all of it of the best quality.

Inside, the Goldins' house gave off a feeling of elegant, expensive, yet somehow casual comfort. Had it belonged to us, my mother, I am sure, would have had all the furniture in the house covered in plastic, or else had herself and her family laminated, and I know for a certainty that none of us would have been allowed to walk on the plush white carpeting with our shoes on. The largest portion of the basement, painted a cool white, was a den and trophy room. Green leather couches and chairs were set around the room. A bar was at one end, a large television set at the other; off in a corner was a slot machine. Glass cases were arranged around the walls at various points in the room. These contained athletic trophies. Some had been won by Sid Goldin, who lettered in both football and basketball at the University of Illinois in the 1930's; above one of the cases there was a picture of him, posed with a football in one hand and with the other arm in what passed in such corny photos of the day for a stiff arm, and another photo of him, the lone Jewish face, seated among the members of the 1934 University of Illinois basketball team. Most of the trophies in the room, though, belonged to Jean Goldin, who was a serious amateur golfer—serious enough, I was told, to have had a national ranking when in her twenties. One glass case was given over to the athletic achievements of the boys, Buddy and Eddie, who were then only fourteen. Before they were through, they would need several more cases to hold all their trophies.

The Goldin boys were not merely good but spectacularly good athletes. They had both come into their full growth fairly early, but even before that their athletic precocity was marked. By the age of thirteen they were already playing in the Sunday morning men's softball games at the Boone schoolyard, and not just filling in, either, but playing significant positions: Eddie at shortstop, letting damn little get by him; Buddy in centerfield, racing back to catch fly balls over his shoulder or up to make shoestring catches, but somehow making it all look easy. Did they inherit their athletic ability from their parents? I don't know what the best scientific opinion on the subject is, but if they didn't I wish someone would explain how they came to be such wonderful athletes.

And yet they were very different kinds of athlete. Eddie Goldin seemed to come by his accomplishments through fierce hard work—unrelenting hustle, in the old sports cliché—and considerable courage. I have never known anyone physically more fearless. If the occasion called for it, Eddie would slide head first on a gravel field, would take a brutal charge on the basketball court, and cross-body block a man twice his size without the least hesitation. Questions of hustle or courage didn't seem to come into play for Buddy Goldin. He was what we used to call in those days "unconscious." On a court or a field everything seemed to come so naturally to him. Even when running very fast he appeared to lope. Like his brother, he had innate athletic intelligence; he seemed instinctively to know what to do and always made what he did look easy. Neither of the Goldin boys ever fumbled or bobbled or dropped the ball; neither seemed to be affected by pressure; neither ever made a mistake in a game, at least none that I ever saw. They were—how else describe it?—gifted, early and richly gifted.

But then there was something gifted and blessed about the entire Goldin family, or so it seemed to me when I was a kid. Food looked and tasted better at their table. Handsome cars seemed always to be backing out of their driveway on the way to immensely interesting places. Such surprises as their lives contained all seemed pleasant ones. What for the Goldins was an everyday matter often tended to knock me off my feet. One day I came home from school with Buddy, and followed him down to the cool white and green room of the basement, where his father was playing gin with three other men. Buddy quickly introduced me to the three men, one of whom was Sid Luckman, the recently retired quarterback of the Chicago

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Bears. "Nice to meetcha, Phillie," he said in a high, slightly whiny voice with a New York accent, not looking up from his cards. Another time, glancing out from Eddie's room down onto the driveway, I noticed Sid and Jean Goldin getting into the blue Fleetwood with a woman who looked very familiar. "Is that woman who I think she is?" I asked Eddie, who came over to the window. "Yeah," he said, "that's Myrna Loy. She's a client of my Dad's."

Sid Goldin was a lawyer, the senior partner in the firm of Goldin, O'Connor, and Corzinowski. But he was a lawyer of a particular kind. As I later learned, he scarcely ever entered a courtroom and he certainly didn't waste his time or eyesight composing or studying legal documents. He was instead a fixer and a smoother, a man with connections and clout, who knew everyone and so was regularly called in to bring together otherwise distant parties for the mutual profit of all. He was the man who knew the man who knew the man who could do what was needed: get you points in a sure-hit Broadway play, have a large parcel of real estate rezoned, call off the unions from organizing your shop. His clientele was generously studded with celebrities, including many former athletes, show-business characters, and Chicago politicians. His own name would on occasion appear in the local columns as "powerhouse attorney Sidney Goldin."

After the University of Illinois, Sid Goldin had gone to law school nights, at John Marshall, and worked days selling furniture for his mother's brother, who had a store on the western rim of the Loop. While working for his uncle and going to law school, he met, courted, and married Jean Goldstein, the only child of Judge Irving Goldstein. It was the middle of the 1930's, a time when local judges were powerful figures in Chicago. Sid remembered once getting caught in a traffic jam on the way to a Bears game with his then future father-in-law, who called over a motorcycle cop, announced that he was "Judge Goldstein, goddammit," and demanded a police escort to Wrigley Field so that he wouldn't be late for the game. Without any hesitation, the cop said, "Follow me, sir," turned his siren on full blast, and Sid and the Judge, following the cop on the wrong side of the street, drove directly to the game without even stopping for red lights.

The Judge loved his daughter and approved of her choice of a husband. He liked having a son-in-law who had been a Big Ten athlete; he recognized that this young man was ambitious and no dope. Sid Goldin's marriage enabled him to avoid the time-wasting error of starting at the bottom. Right out of law school, he was put on to a number of good things by his father-in-law. That he was connected with as powerful a man as the Judge brought him clients without any effort on his part. The Judge looked after his own. In 1942, with America in the war, he arranged to get his son-in-law a commission as a major and a job in the Judge Advocate's office at Fort Sheridan, twenty miles north of Chicago. Sid Goldin slept at home every night and emerged from the war a full-bird colonel. The Judge, it sometimes seemed, could arrange anything, except to avoid choking to death, in his sixty-seventh year, on a piece of porterhouse steak at a restaurant in the Loop called Fritzel's. A tough columnist on the Chicago *Daily News*, writing about the passing (and good riddance, he seemed to feel) of types like Judge Irving Goldstein remarked that he died of good living. A widower, he left his only daughter an estate estimated at roughly $1.5 million, and this was in 1957.

The Goldins were never money mad. As Judge Goldstein's daughter, Jean Goldin had grown up with lots of money around. Sid Goldin, even though he came of age smack in the middle of the Depression, earned big money early enough in life not to be nervous about it. No, the Goldins assumed that they would always have enough money not to have to worry about the absence of it interfering with their going through life absolutely first-class. And this they did, with an ease and sportiness that flabbergasted me, a boy whose father worked seven days a week and worried about kids stealing gum and candy from him and a mother who was apparently attempting to save a white couch for eternity.

It was at the Goldins that I first ate a club sandwich, rare roast beef, a salad served after the main course, strawberry shortcake. I don't think they ever had a bad, or even a mediocre, meal, at least not in their own home. It was through being around Jean Goldin that I, then a boy of fifteen, first arrived at the extraordinary insight that someone's mother could be sexy. All other mothers I knew seemed to be receptacles for anxiety who went about for the better part of the day in something called housecoats. Jean Goldin was not a beautiful woman; her teeth were rather too prominent and her features were neither delicate nor refined. But she wore her straight black hair short, in a European cut, always had a deep tan, and dressed in expensive clothes of dazzling colors. She moved wonderfully well and had the shapely, slightly muscular body of a woman who had spent vast amounts of time on golf courses and tennis courts at the best clubs. As their sons' guest at the Royal Oaks Country Club in Winnetka, I recall once watching her in her one-piece black bathing suit poised in concentration on the diving board at the club pool about to execute a complicated dive; Sid Goldin was at the same time applying suntan oil to his large former athlete's body while stretched out on a chaise longue listening to a Cubs game on a portable radio. At that moment the thought struck me, as it had never before struck me about any other parents

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I knew, that, my God, these two people must have terrific sex together.

I may have gone with the Goldins to Royal Oaks five, maybe six times during the four years I went to high school with Buddy and Eddie, but those times remain among the most vivid memories of my adolescence. I recall the ride down Sheridan Road, Buddy and Eddie sitting up front and I alone in the back, the top down on the Olds Starfire, the leaf-heavy elm trees meeting to form a high tunnel across Sheridan, the mansions along the lake whirling by, the power of the Olds's engine humming, the breeze in my hair. The easy opulence of the country club freshly astonished me each time we drove into the large parking lot with not an old or modest car in sight. I recall the thickness and fine smell of the towels in the locker room; the young Filipino men in white shirts and blue trousers with two thin gold stripes running down the outer leg whose job it was to fetch drinks, cards, fruit, or sherbert, and anything else members might desire, and to shine the members' shoes while they were out on the golf course or having a swim or in the steam bath; the whap-whap-whap of balls being hit off the practice tees mingling with the slower tempi of the pock, pock, pock of balls being hit on the tennis courts; the slender gray-haired mulatto maître d' whose excellent posture lent him an impressive dignity and a slight distance that always made me a touch nervous; and the food, the largeness of the shrimps and the crispness of the beautiful vegetables and the perfection with which the roast beef (which I always ordered) was cooked and the lusciousness of the desserts, the ice creams and raspberries and rich yet somehow delicate cakes and custards. The Goldins usually dined at seven-thirty—everyone I knew in West Rogers Park had supper at six—and I remember once rising from the table at Royal Oaks with them at nine-thirty and thinking, with a vague sense of betrayal, that my Dad was just then checking the back door and getting ready to lock up the drugstore.

Neither Buddy nor Eddie Goldin played golf in those days, though Buddy, I learned, would later in life play in high-stakes match games. (Someone was always organizing a "Nassau" or "skins" game at Royal Oaks in which thousands of dollars changed hands, and dollar-a-point gin games were available in the card rooms for those with a taste for serious indoor action.) When they took me to the club, we swam, sunned ourselves, ate, and played half-court basketball, three on a side, against the caddies who had come in after finishing a round or were waiting to go out on a second round. When your team lost, you gave up the court, which we three, since we always won, never had to do. I was the least of the reasons for our never having to relinquish the court. Eddie Goldin, though not that tall, was well-built, a rugged defender, an intelligent rebounder, and a tireless hustler all over the court. And Buddy, Buddy could do everything. He was beautiful to watch. His performance on the court was pure, sure instinct, he didn't have to think about what he did; his body knew what was required and seemed automatically to supply the fakes, the cuts, the quick swoops to the basket, the effortless, perfectly timed leaps, the pull-up dead-on jump shots. "Next," Buddy would call out, after having scored the eleventh basket for our side and thus eliminated yet another threesome of caddies.

In basketball, Buddy Goldin, that great natural athlete, had found his natural sport. At Evanston Township High School he was second-team all-state in his senior year, and later started as a guard at the University of Iowa. Eddie played baseball at E.T.H.S.—he was a ninth-round draft pick of the St. Louis Cardinals as a shortstop—and junior and senior years started at quarterback on the football team. In those years—the middle 1950's—E.T.H.S. was regularly featured in polls as among the top ten schools in the country, often as the very top school. My father read and believed in such polls; they must have comforted him, for he had to sell a lot of newspapers and gum and fill a lot of prescriptions to send his son there. Insofar as one can tell about these things, I guess it was a pretty good school: it gave me a solid grounding in math and chemistry that was later useful in helping me get into medical school. It was a large and competitive place, E.T.H.S., full of bright kids and with a serious atmosphere.

In its sports program, though, the school was really impressive. Its athletic department resembled that of a middle-sized college and one with a winning tradition. All equipment, no matter how minor the sport, was superior; great expense was lavished on facilities, and a modern new fieldhouse was built during my last year there. The contracts of losing coaches were not renewed. Basketball and football games drew thousands; a few college scouts were always in the stands. I remember one afternoon after school watching Eddie Goldin being taught how to execute the bootleg play under the eye of the backfield coach and three assistants who were physical-education majors from Big Ten schools doing their practice teaching at E.T.H.S. (The last E.T.H.S. quarterback before Eddie was now starting at the University of Michigan, where Eddie himself would go on a football scholarship.) Over and over they ran Eddie through this relatively simple play, each time making some small refinement in their instruction. (I never had such careful teaching in med school.) Buddy Goldin told me that the basketball coach would shrink the nets on the game baskets to slow down visiting teams with effective fast breaks. The Goldin boys not only came through the intense pressure of such competition intact; they took it all in easy stride, flourishing under it, starring in it.

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I admired Buddy and Eddie Goldin and was proud to be thought of around school as their friend. What they saw in me, I really don't know. I don't think they ever gave much thought to other people's standing, so secure were they in their own, but instead took people as they found them. I was a neighborhood guy; we were all growing up together, however wildly different the circumstances. I was, by the standard of the day, "a good guy," which is to say not a liar or a prig or vicious or mean. That I wasn't in any other way outstanding wasn't a problem for the Goldins or their parents. They weren't, in any sense, snobs. If they had been in the least snobbish, they would have excluded me.

For my own part, I don't think I hung around the Goldins for snobbish reasons, though God knows I was excited by the luxury of their lives and the ease with which everything seemed to be taken care of for them. Then there was the glamor. I never saw Sid Luckman, not to mention Myrna Loy, emerge from a six-flat, or any other building on Washtenaw Avenue. But beyond all this I know I was in awe of the Goldins, all of them, but especially Buddy and Eddie, for their talent. Despite my father's best efforts—he was always supplying me with information about Albert Einstein and other great Jewish scientists—I grew up with no real appreciation for intellectual talent; and among the crowd of kids I ran around with, artistic talent, if any existed, hadn't shown up and I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have recognized it if it had. But athletic talent of the kind the Goldin boys had was not only unmistakable but admired by nearly everyone. I know I admired it. A part of me, even though I am now in my middle forties, still does.

Buddy and Eddie Goldin may have inherited much of the means of their prowess—their coordination, their reflexes, their musculature—from their athletic parents. But where did Buddy come by the ability, which he possessed at sixteen, to pop in two free throws in the last seconds of an overtime to win a game in a state tournament with some 12,000 people screaming at him to miss—and pop them in authoritatively, with no doubt or hesitation about it? Where did Eddie acquire the knack for throwing a football with perfect accuracy into the hands of a receiver forty yards away while freezing rain was blowing in his face and six or seven bruisers going at full speed were trying to crush him? The Goldin boys could do such things because they had talent, and it's called that because few people have it, and if you don't have it to begin with you aren't likely to get it. I knew I didn't have it, and I knew that I never would—I knew that everything I would get in life would come from plodding and from hard work, which was fair enough. But this put me in a different category from the Goldins, who were, for me, extraordinary characters.

Christmas vacation of our senior year in high school, Sid Goldin took his family off for a week's holiday in Barbados, and Jean Goldin asked if I would mind coming in twice a day to walk and feed her dog, a white standard poodle named Francesca, whom she didn't want to put in a kennel. Jessie, the cook, had been given the week off and I let myself in at eight in the morning and then returned at seven at night to walk and feed Francesca again. Under the pretense of keeping the dog company, I would remain in that wondrous house for an hour or so in the evening, feeling the thick carpeting under my feet, drinking in the soft and subtle coloring of the furniture and the draperies. Sometimes I would sit in the white basement, with its green leather furniture and glass trophy cases, turn on the television, pour myself a ginger ale from the bar, and wish I had a room of my own here—wish, guiltily, that my own last name was Goldin and that I was a member of this family.

After they returned from Barbados, Jean Goldin called my mother to tell her that she had a fine and responsible young man for a son. When I next came over, Sid Goldin said, "Good job with the dog, Phillie. We're grateful." He shook my hand, and when he had removed his hand, a crisp new fifty-dollar bill was in my own.

Senior year was a good one for us all. Eddie got his offer from the Cardinals and a football scholarship from the University of Michigan; Buddy made all-state and had some thirty-odd offers of basketball scholarships, from which he chose the University of Iowa; and I was accepted by Yale, though because of the tight money situation at home (my sister was going into her junior year at Wisconsin), I decided instead to do my pre-med at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

The Saturday night after graduation, Sid and Jean Goldin threw a party in honor of their sons. An enormous yellow-and-white striped tent went up on their ample back lawn. In one corner of the tent the Ramsey Lewis trio played; in the corner across the way, a black man in a white jacket and a chef's hat stood with a large carving knife and fork before a huge prime-rib roast, a turkey, and a ham. Three small bars were working, two in the tent and a third in the basement of the house. I noticed Sid Luckman in the crowd and, later, Ernie Banks, the Cubs' shortstop, showed up. There were a few local columnists, the guy who did the evening news on Channel 5, and the wife of the man who was the head of Standard Oil of Indiana. Buddy Goldin pointed out a somewhat withdrawn looking man who turned out to be Burr Tilstrom, the puppeteer; he was talking to a man who had been in prison for allegedly kidnapping a syndicate figure named Jake (The Barber) Factor. Waiters brought around trays of canapés and others trays of champagne in wide-mouthed glasses. The women seemed

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light and dazzling in their summer dresses. I found myself at one point talking to one of them, a beautiful young woman who asked me who the Goldins were. She was with a touring company playing *My Fair Lady* at the Blackstone Theater and had been brought here by a man who the year before had won twenty games for the Chicago White Sox.

Whether any speeches were made, or gifts given, or how or at what time the evening ended, I have no idea. For me it was over around ten o'clock, when, I was later told by Eddie Goldin, I passed out after what must have been eleven or twelve glasses of champagne, while singing the Whiffenpoof song to Jean Goldin and a man named Grolnik who was a big real-estate operator on the Near North Side. At their mother's bidding, Eddie and Buddy carried me to the guest room upstairs, where I slept in my clothes until six-thirty the next morning. Rumpled, grubby, foggy-brained, walking up the stairs to our apartment, I met my Dad coming down, on his way to open the store. "You okay, Phillie?" he asked, placing the back of his hand lightly across my forehead. I mumbled something about its having been a long night. In my small dark bedroom, standing over the beige chenille spread on my bed, I peeled off my clothes, letting them fall to the floor, thinking, sadly, that a crucial chapter in my life was finished.

THAT summer marked the beginning of the end of my friendship with the Goldin boys. Nothing went wrong; there was no falling out. It was just the natural drifting apart that takes place when boys turn eighteen and must act on the pretense that they are now young men. Two days after graduation, Eddie Goldin reported to a Cardinals' farm club in Sarasota, Florida, where he learned the hard but undeniable lesson that he couldn't hit curve balls, which forced him to decide that he had to put his energies into football in the fall at the University of Michigan. Buddy Goldin became a counselor at Ray Meyer's summer basketball camp, where he was able to work out with the guys who played for DePaul, Loyola, Illinois, and other major Midwest basketball schools before he went off to Iowa in the fall. As for me, I worked a forty-hour week at the drugstore, handling the front register, doing stock work, making deliveries, and listening to my father tell me how good life was going to be once I became a physician.

Looking back on my friendship with Eddie and Buddy Goldin, I am a bit amazed at how little intimacy there was in it. For three of the four years we went to high school, we drove there together every morning. What did we talk about? About sports we talked a good deal. About girls a certain amount. Friday nights we often went to the movies together. Sometimes they would take me along with them to some major sports event, for tickets were never a problem for Sid Goldin. None of us dated much. As Jews we were a minority at E.T.H.S., which we wouldn't have been had we gone either to Senn or Sullivan high schools in Chicago. Neither of the Goldin boys talked much about his parents, and I'm not at all sure that they did when they were alone. What I took to be the glamor of their life at home, they took as perfectly natural, and why not, since they hadn't ever known anything else. I thought they were the luckiest kids in the world, and I felt a little lucky myself—maybe "privileged" is the better word—to be hanging around with them.

EDDIE was second-string quarterback his freshman year at Michigan, and he ran back punts and kickoffs and did both very well. Buddy started as a freshman on the Iowa basketball team. He was not yet the star he showed signs of becoming in his sophomore year, but from the beginning he made his presence felt—he averaged something like fourteen points a game—and was completely at ease playing Big Ten basketball. I went to the Iowa-Illinois game at Champaign that year and felt real pride at Buddy's poise on the floor. He looked to have put on ten or so pounds, all of it muscle, which made him seem sleek and more in possession of himself than ever. Both he and Eddie always looked born for the athletic uniforms they wore, so much so that, like certain high-ranking military officers, they sometimes seemed a little disppointing out of uniform. Iowa beat Illinois that night when, at the buzzer, Buddy popped in an eighteen-foot jump shot from the top of the key. All that was missing, I thought at the time, was for him to call out "Next," as he used to do with the caddies. I had hoped to spend an hour or so after the game with him, but it turned out that the Iowa team was getting back on its bus to Iowa City that night and that there would be no spare time. I was sorry to have missed him. Michigan went to the Rose Bowl that year and the Iowa basketball team was playing in a holiday tournament in North Carolina, so I didn't get to see either Eddie or Buddy that Christmas vacation.

Games and glory and expensive travel somehow seemed natural to the Goldins. It was what Buddy and Eddie were born into and grew up with. I always assumed that once spikes and cleats, helmets and balls were set aside, they would settle into a life of easy comfort, with powerful contacts and beautiful wives and children who were themselves splendid athletes. Short of a major illness or some inconceivable financial reversal, how could it ever be otherwise? Or so I believed, until one day in my sophomore year—I recall I was studying for a big midterm exam in organic chemistry—when I called home and my father asked if I had read about the fix my friends Eddie and Buddy Goldin's dad had gotten himself into. I never read the newspapers in Champaign, and

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told my father I had no idea what he was talking about.

"Apparently Sidney Goldin is connected with some kind of black-market baby ring," my father said. "It looks like pretty serious stuff."

"Is it getting a big play in the press, Dad?"

"Front-page headlines in both the *Trib* and the *Sun-Times*," my father said, "with photos of Mrs. Goldin and your friends Buddy and Eddie. It's also the lead story on the evening television news."

My father went on to ask if I was prepared for my organic chemistry exam, and my mother got on the phone to give me some bits of family and neighborhood news, but my mind was elsewhere and I couldn't wait to get hold of that day's Chicago newspapers. When I did, I found that it was every bit as bad as my father had suggested. The *Sun-Times* headline read, "CELEB ATTORNEY SELLS INFANTS"; the Chicago *Tribune* ran, "POWERFUL LAWYER BABY BLACK MARKETEER" and beneath that, "Sidney Goldin, Former Illinois Athlete, Counselor to Famous, Linked to Baby Ranch." On page three, the *Sun-Times* had photos of Sid and Jean Goldin in evening clothes at a fund-raising dinner for Adlai Stevenson; lower down on the page were blurry photos of the Goldin boys, Buddy in his University of Iowa jersey, Eddie in his Michigan football helmet. The *Trib* ran a smaller picture of Sid Goldin alone, a head shot in which he looked dark and prosperous and rather beaky. Staring at this photograph, which appeared on the front page, I found myself muttering a line I had often heard my father use, "This doesn't look good for the Jews."

What I was able to gather from the newspaper stories—which held the front page for three days—was that Sid Goldin had operated here in his familiar role of middleman. An OB-GYN man on the Northwest Side named Dr. Howard Peterson was really the main figure. Peterson placed unmarried pregnant girls in homes during their pregnancies, paying their room and board and giving them an additional $3,000 at the termination of their pregnancy, for which they signed their child over to him—or at least they believed they did, since the deal was obviously illegal. Working through lawyers around the city, Peterson turned infants over to couples wishing to adopt children but unable to do so through the ordinary, and in those days extremely rigorous, child-adoption procedures. To obtain a baby in this way cost $20,000, with $15,000 going to Peterson and the remainder to the lawyer.

Sid Goldin had evidently brokered at least seven of these illegal adoptions. The last of them was arranged for a prominent Irish politician, an alderman married to a Jewish woman who was unable to have children. The politician had enemies, and one of them turned the press loose on the story of how the politician, with his mixed marriage, was able to adopt a child when state-run agencies at the time all but categorically refused children to homes where parents did not share the same religion. One thing led to another—or perhaps it would be better to say that one thing led to another which led to Sidney Goldin which led to scandal.

Why did Sid Goldin get mixed up in such stuff? He couldn't have needed the money—though, true enough, lots of people who don't need it will still pick up an easy five grand if they don't have to do much work for it. Apart from the money, my guess is that it gave Sid Goldin pleasure to be the swing man on something so crucial to important people—and all of his clients in these adoptions were important people—as their getting a child. Arranging, after all, is what Sid Goldin did—was what he was famous for—and arranging to get someone a child, a live human being, was in some sense the ultimate arrangement. I'm not sure that Sid Goldin thought about it in this way. He probably viewed it more simply. Some couples needed a child; he knew a man who had children; the people who got the child would be happy; the children would go to prosperous and, as far as anyone could tell, good homes; he, Sidney Goldin, would be the man who made it all possible; and there was an easy five grand in it besides. What was so wrong?

The Illinois Bar Association felt there was enough wrong to disbar Sidney Goldin for a minimum of ten years; and since he was in his late forties at the time, this just about finished him as a lawyer. His law partners bought him out and removed his name from the firm. His rich and famous clients almost uniformly deserted him as a friend. He didn't have to go on trial, and thus risk jail, and he still had all the money he would need to get him through the rest of his life, but the humiliations, small and large, continued for some time. In neighborhood gossip, he was known as the man who sold babies. When it came time to pay his annual dues at the Royal Oaks Country Club, where he and Jean Goldin chose not to show their faces for nearly a year, his check was returned to him by the executive secretary with a curt note saying that the club was cutting back its membership, especially among people who hadn't been making much use of the facilities in recent months, and therefore could not accept his dues; a second check, this one for his original membership fee, was included in the envelope. I currently belong to Royal Oaks, am in fact on the club's board of directors, and I pulled the old Goldin file where I found this letter. I don't like to think about his wife's reaction when Sid Goldin showed it to her.

As for the Goldin boys, both of them soon developed troubles of their own. Buddy was having a brilliant season at Iowa, averaging twenty-one points a game and leading the Big Ten in assists, when in a game at Purdue,

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he felt the ball getting away from him and the floor rushing up to meet him, and the next thing he knew he was on a stretcher on the way to the hospital in West Lafayette. His left knee had given out, ligaments had been torn, and, more significant, cartilage had been destroyed. Buddy was through for the season. When he came back for his junior year, he played with his left leg in an awkward harness of tape and plastic braces. He was never again the same athlete. His former quickness was gone; his instincts, built upon absolute confidence in that quickness, were shot. He lost his place as a starter; and sensing that he would never regain his old form, which meant that he would never again play big-time basketball, he chose not to return to the University of Iowa for his senior year. He went back to Chicago, finishing his schooling at Loyola University and after that at the Loyola Law School.

Buddy lived at home when he returned from Iowa, and continued to live there until his last year of law school. He took up golf, at which—no surprise—he was marvelous right off, shooting in the middle seventies by the second year he played. He and Sid Goldin played together at public courses. A few years later, when the scandal had been pretty much forgotten, the Goldins joined another country club, Twin Orchards, whose pro told Sid Goldin that, if Buddy really gave golf his full attention, he could be good enough to play on the pro tour. If his father's scandal threw Buddy in any serious way, there was no obvious evidence of it.

As for Eddie Goldin, I heard that, though he stayed at the University of Michigan, he had dropped off the football team, giving no other explanation than that the sport now bored him. I also heard that he had become very earnest about his studies. Eddie was always a better student in high school than Buddy; I don't recall his being in any way exceptional, but then their athletic ability cast everything else about Eddie and Buddy Goldin into the shade. In any case, Eddie, I heard, was no longer a business but now a philosophy major.

When I ran into Eddie on Devon Avenue in the summer between our junior and senior years, I'm not sure I would have recognized him if he hadn't spoken to me first. His dark, curly hair, usually cut short, had grown out and was uncombed. Where before he had been a tidy dresser, there was now something fundamentally rumpled about him: his flannel shirt was unironed, his Levis soiled, his Frye boots caked with mud. In later years he would top off some variant of this standard outfit with a parrot named Crackers who, from his perch on Eddie's shoulder, croaked out political slogans mixed with rich obscenities. Just now he was accompanied by a thin, rather drab-looking girl whom he introduced to me as "Reb." When she shyly said she was pleased to meet me, I thought I detected an Appalachian accent. The three of us walked up the block to a corner restaurant, run by Greeks, called Kofield's.

"My mother's fine," Eddie answered, when I asked about his parents, "and my dad is the same asshole he has always been."

The use of that word rocked me. I used my share of profanity as a kid, and I find enough occasions to use it nowadays, but the word Eddie used to describe his father is one I have always hated. The shock of hearing it from Eddie was compounded by the fact that, among their other qualities as All-American kid athletes, the Goldin boys, neither one of them, ever swore. Meanwhile, that word lay there between us.

"What's the problem with your dad?" I asked.

"There's no big problem," Eddie said, "except that he's a phony, a complete fraud."

"Are you referring to his troubles of a few years ago?"

"Tip of the fuckin' iceberg," he said. "The way we live, they way Buddy and I were brought up, the whole thing through and through is rotten. And of course the fuckin' joke is my old man hasn't any notion how rotten it all is. Like all real immoralists, he hasn't a clue that there's anything wrong with the way he lives."

Nor could Eddie's friend Reb have had the least clue about what he was saying. I noticed she had a small, homemade heart tattooed on her thin upper-arm. She said nothing, but sipped a coke through her small, gray, somehow immensely sad teeth. I was sure that Eddie had already brought her home to meet Sid and Jean Goldin—just to let them know that his days of adding to the trophy cases were over for good.

What do you do when an old friend sitting across the table from you attacks his own father? I mumbled something about Sid Goldin's always having been nice to me, but it was pointless. Eddie wasn't really interested in hearing any defense of his father. He was still in the early stages of formulating his own distaste for him, convincing himself of the righteousness of his anger, building his case. When it was completed it must have been some case, for more than twenty-five years later Eddie was still relentless in his hatred of his father.

We graduated in the summer of 1961, and that autumn I began medical school at the University of Illinois in Chicago; Buddy started law school at Loyola; and Eddie, who was among the first round of people accepted for the Peace Corps, went off to teach rudimentary construction techniques to villagers in Central Africa. It was in Africa that he acquired the parrot. He liked Africa, for all its heat and insects and desolation, and when his Peace Corps tour was finished he visited Albert Schweitzer, in the hope of staying on and working for him at his hospital mission at Lambaréné on the forested banks of the Ogooué River. Eddie was apparently able to get a personal in-

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terview with Dr. Schweitzer, though he was not offered a job. I later heard that, when someone asked him what Dr. Schweitzer was like, Eddie answered that he was an "asshole." At least no one could say that Albert Schweitzer and Sidney Goldin had nothing in common.

After his return from Africa, Eddie went back to Ann Arbor to begin work on a doctorate in philosophy. It took him eleven years to get it. The 60's intervened. Ann Arbor in those days was Berkeley Midwest, and Eddie Goldin was in the thick of it. The boy athlete who had been so fearless at ten and twelve wasn't likely to go in for halfway measures at twenty-five. He was SDS; there was talk of his leaving the United States for Sweden in support of those who fled the country to avoid the draft. As Eddie's friend, even though I scarcely saw him, I was glad it never came to that.

"My son Eddie," said Sid Goldin, seated across from me on the green leather couch in my office in Wilmette at the Plaza del Lago, "has wasted his entire life hating his father. It makes me sick to think about it."

Perhaps Sid Goldin was so openly dour because I had just given him the depressing if far from disastrous news that he would need a gall-bladder operation. He had come into my office for a second opinion, which all the insurance companies nowadays require before they will pay for major surgery. My name had been recommended to him by his regular internist, Howie Levine—with whom I had gone to medical school and whom I see socially—chiefly because my office is located close to the Goldins' current home in Winnetka. (Once they turned sixty, Jean and Sid Goldin began to spend their winters near Palm Springs, in a condominium they owned at Rancho Mirage.) I was a bit disappointed but not surprised to discover that he didn't remember, until I reminded him of it, that I was the same Philip Hirsh who had run around with his sons in high school. Why, after all, should a man who had had movie stars and professional athletes for clients, who had played in the fast track long before that phrase was even coined, remember a not very interesting boy of sixteen whom he hadn't seen for more than twenty-five years?

I, on the other hand, would have recognized Sid Goldin anywhere. He still had the look of the high roller: the deep sun tan, the expensive clothes comfortably worn, the general air of a man for whom all the more trivial details and little bothers of life—from shoeshines to shopping and tax worries—have always been looked after by hired hands. He had kept his satiny black wavy hair, which now had only touches of gray at the temples. Apart from his gall-bladder problem, his health was good. At sixty-four, he wasn't carrying around any extra weight, his heart was sound, his muscle tone was extraordinary.

"Eddie never really took hold," he continued. "By the time he got his Ph.D. degree, he was in his middle thirties. His *meshuggene* politics took up most of his time and energy, at least as far as his mother and I could tell. Anyhow, he never got a permanent teaching post. One year, he's teaching at Geneseo, New York, the next year he's at Irvine, California, one year his brother gets a card from him in Taiwan. The kind of life he leads, he might as well have stayed in minor-league baseball. He never married, you know, and my guess is that he never will."

I wondered if Eddie ever thought of himself as locked forever into the academic equivalent of minor-league baseball. Having once been a first-rate athlete, he could not have found it easy to reconcile himself to being a fourth-rate philosophy teacher. At least I don't think such a thing would have been easy for me. But then I wasn't Eddie Goldin.

"We never hear from Eddie directly," Sid Goldin said. "All we know of his whereabouts is from his brother, whom he calls once or twice a year. The last time Eddie and I were together—it's almost twenty years now—he told me off. Called me a phony and a four-flusher and living a lie. Said that everything I had was built on cheating and deceit. His mother, he said, was no better, since she lived so comfortably with my corruption. But he was damned if he was going to. He wasn't going to take another penny from me, and some day he hoped to pay back every cent I had ever spent on him so that he would be free from any contamination from my crummy life. That's what he called it, you know, 'my crummy life.' My own son."

There was an unbearable silence. "How are things going with Buddy?" I asked, hoping to get the conversation on to a less painful subject.

"Buddy's got his own troubles," Sid Goldin said. He shifted his weight, resting an arm along the back of the green couch. I noticed dangling from his wrist, beyond his cashmere sport jacket and the monogram that showed on the cuff of his shirt, a thin gold chain bracelet. Odd little touch of foppery, I thought, in a man his age. "Your old friend Buddy has a serious gambling problem. It started about fifteen years ago. He wasn't making his nut as a lawyer, so he tried to make up his personal and business expenses through betting on ball games, cards, his own golf games. Twice now he's enrolled himself in Gamblers' Anonymous. His wife threatened to leave him if he didn't go into therapy, which he's in currently. It's a damn mess."

"How bad does it get?"

"All I know is what he's come to me for to bail him out. Whether he's into other people also, I don't know. At first he came for small dips—five and ten grand. Then he jumped it up to twenty,

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twenty-five, once forty. 'Buddy boy,' I said to him, 'you're going through your inheritance mighty quick.' After each time he comes to me, there is a quiet period, lasting maybe three or four months. But it's waiting for a bomb to go off. The last time he came to me it was for ninety grand. He was into heavy juice with the boys, if you know what I mean. He told me they would kill him if he didn't come up with the money. He wept, my beautiful All-State son, he put his head on my shoulder and clung to me and said, 'Dad, you got to help me, you got to.' Of course I did. I'm his father."

I don't know why Sid Goldin chose to talk so openly about his sons with me. Maybe it was because I was a stranger who nonetheless had known him and his sons in their glory days. I wouldn't be at all surprised to learn that he couldn't talk to old friends with the same candor that he used in talking to me that afternoon, sitting on my green leather couch—a couch that, when I came to pick furniture for my office, I chose because it reminded me of the green leather furniture from his own house on Lunt.

"Dr. Hirsh," he said (and to have him, at whose home I was once introduced to Sid Luckman, address me as doctor seemed very strange), "were my sons once really extraordinary boys, or have I just dreamed it? Wasn't there a time, Doc, when the world seemed to belong to Eddie and Buddy? Or is it all something I imagined? They were such wonderful kids. Respectful. Disciplined. Never in trouble."

"Mr. Goldin," I said, "your sons were the best. They were great kids, gifted and decent and without any meanness of any kind. Being their friend was one of the nicest things about my boyhood."

"What do you suppose went wrong, Doc? Was it my fault? Was it the way we brought the boys up? To this day my wife and I, when we talk about it together, don't really know how to account for what happened. Did we spoil them? You probably don't remember, but I had a little trouble with the press when they were in college, a little scandal—could that have been the problem? What has to happen, Doc, to turn two swell kids into a rebel and a weakling? The more my wife and I talk about it, the less we understand. Beats me," he said with a sigh and rose from the couch.

It beat me, too, and I had no solacing platitudes to offer. I could provide a clear second opinion on Sid Goldin's gall bladder but not on what had happened to his sons. Instead I told him that I would send along my report to the Blue Cross and that a man in his general good health really had little to worry about from this operation. I asked to be remembered to Mrs. Goldin. He thanked me, we shook hands, and the next time I saw him was at Buddy's funeral service in the Piser chapel in Skokie.

THAT was roughly six months after Sid Goldin had sat in my office. Buddy, I learned from his friend Lloyd Brodsky in the Piser parking lot after the service, had gone into the tank for more than a hundred grand and was being threatened by syndicate collection men. In the suicide note he left in his office, he wrote that he was too ashamed of himself to go back to his father for more money and too ashamed to go on living. He thanked his parents for standing by him as long and as well as they had, and asked that they look after his wife and young daughters, to whom he apologized for what he was about to do—which was to hurl himself from his office window twenty-three floors above LaSalle Street—and whom he asked to try always to remember that he loved them dearly.

I had appointments lined up in the office that afternoon, and so didn't drive out to the Waldheim Cemetery on the West Side. On the fifteen-minute drive back to Wilmette I thought further about the Goldin boys, but with no better results than Sid and Jean Goldin. Buddy and Eddie were blessed with talent—of a small and limited kind, agreed, but real talent nonetheless—and it set them apart, made them different. At least to me, who was without talent, it made them seem radiant and even a little magical. Were their sad endings—Buddy's on the pavement in downtown Chicago, Eddie's to wander all his life unattached and without consequence—somehow connected to their brilliant beginnings? Did the blessing of talent always carry its own inexplicable curse? These were deeper waters than I was accustomed to sail, and it was probably best that I clear my mind, for awaiting me in my office were people who wanted my authoritative assurance that they need not fear death by stroke, heart attack, or cancer, at least not for the present, and from every indication could go on living for years to come, which all of them would be perfectly happy to do without any thought of talent whatsoever. The Goldin boys, my old friends Buddy and Eddie, weren't so lucky.

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Perversions of the Holocaust

Lucy S. Dawidowicz

NEARLY half a century has passed since the murder of the European Jews during World War II, and it might be thought that at this late date we understand fully how and why the German state under Hitler committed its terrible crimes. Yet scholars are still producing monographs and books with new explanations of how it all came about. To be sure, every new generation of scholars revises the work of its predecessors and rewrites history according to its own lights. Today, however, a number of professional historians are propounding interpretations of the murder of the European Jews so implausible and so perverse that, even as they strain credulity, they undermine the credibility of the historical enterprise itself.

The origin of these bizarre explanations can be traced to West Germany, where, indeed, most scholarly work on the subject has been produced. In the wake of the student riots in the late 1960's, leftist historians, searching for a more sophisticated social theory than that provided by Marxism, reached out to other disciplines for theoretical concepts of "system, structure, and function." These "structuralist" historians began to transform the writing of history from an account of the deeds and ideas of men into a record of the workings of impersonal institutions.

In studying the Nazi past, the new generation of historians concluded that the Nazi state had functioned not in accordance with its leaders' intentions and policies but largely through the near-autonomous workings of its bureaucracies. Thus, these historians became tagged as "functionalists," in contrast to "intentionalists," who held, and hold, that Hitler's ideas and intentions were what determined the course of Germany's history. The structuralists/functionalists furthermore believed that Hitler's Germany, far from being a dictatorship operating under the Fuehrer principle, was more like a bureaucratic jungle, in which officials scrambled to establish their own jurisdictions and to exercise authority independently of Hitler.

As against the universally held view that Hitler's will and intentions had set Germany's agenda and shaped its policies, and that the state's institutions—notably the infamous SS—had been dedicated to executing that will, the structuralists/functionalists claimed that Hitler was a weak leader. They also minimized or altogether dismissed the view that the racial anti-Semitism which obsessed Hitler (and which afflicted German society as a whole after World War I) had succeeded in penetrating into all aspects of policy-making in the German dictatorship. One leading functionalist went so far as to claim that the "Jewish question" in the Nazi state was merely a matter of tactics, not a fundamental aspect of state policy.

Actually, few functionalists were familiar with all the sources and documents relevant to the murder of the European Jews, which was not the area of their specialization. But lack of competence did not inhibit them from imposing their dogmas on the historical evidence. They focused on one particular issue, for which, as in many crucial junctures in history, the documents are not as precise and explicit as historians would like: when, if at all, and by whom, if anyone, was a decision made to murder the Jews? Much functionalist writing concentrated on the absence among the Nazi records of unambiguous written instructions to murder the Jews.

One functionalist, Uwe Dietrich Adam, claiming from the start that Germany's anti-Jewish policies had not been planned in advance and that "Hitler merely reacted to existing circumstances and did not create them himself," went on to argue from the absence of a written order to kill the Jews that Hitler had not decided on a systematic program of murder even when the *Einsatzgruppen*, the SS special-duty forces, began shooting Jews *en masse* in the summer of 1941, in Soviet-held territory. From the fact that by November 1941 the *Einsatzgruppen*, operating in four specially trained armed divisions, had already murdered about a million Jews, Adam did concede that Hitler *might* have made such a decision late in 1941, but not before then.*

A spate of functionalist articles appearing in the wake of Adam's book spawned a series of academic conferences, and from these conferences, in turn, emerged book-length collections of papers.† Still, notwithstanding their energy and industry, the functionalists have succeeded in persuading only a coterie of those who share their articles of faith. Their views, being profoundly at variance with the

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* *Judenpolitik im dritten Reich* (1972). Adam's is the only full-length functionalist book dealing with Nazi Germany's anti-Jewish policies. For more on his thesis, see the introduction to the Tenth Anniversary Edition of my *The War Against the Jews 1933-1945* (Bantam, 1986).

† One such volume, edited by François Furet, the historian of the French Revolution, has just been published as *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews* (Schocken, 392 pp., $29.95).

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knowledge accumulated over decades, have remained outside the historical consensus and have so far failed to alter public consciousness of the Nazi period.

YET functionalist theory still plays a role, and is sometimes used as a gambit to undermine long-established historical judgments. Thus, Arno J. Mayer, who holds an endowed chair in European history at Princeton, in his new book, *Why Did the Heavens Not Darken?: The "Final Solution" in History,** presents the thesis that Hitler was embarked on a premeditated, holy crusade to crush the Soviet Union and liquidate international Communism, but that he never intended to murder the Jews. Echoing Uwe Dietrich Adam, Mayer argues that only in the fall of 1941, when they came to believe that their anti-Bolshevik crusade was faltering, did Hitler and his generals turn against the Jews, convenient scapegoats on whom the Germans now discharged their frustration and rage at having been thwarted in their holy war against the Soviet Union.

Mayer's revisionist agenda is an ambitious one, which he presents without any inhibiting footnotes to document his questionable assertions and debatable interpretations. (In a recent interview, Mayer ridiculed footnotes as "a fetish [that] very often interferes with careful intellection and rumination.") He undertakes to show (1) that racial anti-Semitism was never a significant factor in the Nazi party or in the governance of the Nazi state; (2) that the Nazis intended only to deport the Jews, not to murder them; (3) that the murder squads of the *Einsatzgruppen* had no orders to kill Jews; and (4) that at Auschwitz more Jews died of "natural causes" than in the gas chambers.

Anti-Semitism as the fueling energy of Nazi ideology gets short shrift from Mayer. "Just as anti-Semitism was not the core of Hitler's presumption," he claims, "it did not have precedence over his other dogmas, particularly anti-Marxism and anti-Bolshevism." Though he concedes that "inwardly anti-Semitism may have been Hitler's core idea and all-consuming passion," in the very next sentence he also asserts that "before 1933 neither [Hitler's] public discourse nor the creed and ritual of the Nazi movement put [anti-Semitism] first, or were perceived as doing so." So much for *Mein Kampf*, the thick dossiers of Hitler's anti-Semitic speeches before he came to power, and the 25-point program the fledgling Nazi party adopted in 1920, which stated that no Jew could ever belong to the German *Volk* and that only persons of German blood could be citizens of the German state.

Even when Mayer does acknowledge the presence of anti-Semitism in Hitler's mind and in the Nazi movement, he does not define it as an irrational hatred of the Jews or as fanatical racism, but as a screen for other resentments. Thus, he turns the Jews into "*surrogate* victims of [Hitler's] counterattack against polymorphous modernity, which was his ultimate *target*" (emphasis in the original). According to Mayer, "if Hitler's worldview had an epicenter, it was his deep-seated animosity toward contemporary civilization, and not his hatred for Jews, which was grafted onto it."

Given this upside-down account of Hitler's anti-Semitism, it is not surprising that Mayer scants the role played by racial ideas in Nazi political thinking and in the plans for war. Only now and then does he acknowledge that the goal of *Lebensraum*, "living space" for the master Aryan race in its quest for empire, was the motivating idea for the war and for the invasion of Russia. Nor does he associate the murder of the Jews with the aim of racial empire, despite convincing evidence that Hitler and his associates planned the two in synchronization, with the elimination of the Jews being necessary in order to ensure the purity and supremacy of the Aryan race.

In laying the groundwork for his thesis that the Germans never intended to murder the Jews, Mayer redefines the term "Judeobolshevism," which in Nazi jargon was an epithet for the so-called Jewish conspiracy that already controlled Russia and aspired to control the world. Mayer gives this lunatic fantasy a more rational meaning than it ever had in the Nazi lexicon, suggesting that "bolshevism" referred simply to the Soviet regime, and the modifying "Judeo" to a Jewish presence in that regime. In this way he derives warrant to conclude that when the Nazis invoked the term "Judeobolshevism" they were referring to the Soviet Union and not to the Jews. The war against Russia was therefore, according to Mayer, a crusade to extirpate Bolshevism, not to acquire *Lebensraum*, create an Aryan empire, or murder the Jews.

Yet Mayer also cites texts which contradict his definition of "Judeobolshevism." One, for example, is Hitler's proclamation to his troops in October 1941, explaining that poverty in Russia was

> the result of nearly twenty-five years of Jewish rule, with a Bolshevik system that is essentially similar to the capitalist system, the carriers of both systems being the same, namely Jews and only Jews.

This compelling illustration of the Nazis' irrational understanding of capitalism and Bolshevism makes not the slightest dent in Mayer's reasoning.

MAYER'S next step is to dust off a long-discredited hypothesis—namely, that once they had crushed Russia, the Nazis originally intended not to kill the Jews but to deport and resettle them "in a Lublin-like reservation beyond the Volga or the Urals." Mayer likely borrowed this idea from Adam, who holds that as late as mid-1941 "the final solution of the Jewish question" meant only resettling the Jews in Madagascar.

The notion of shipping the Jews to Madagascar originated in Germany in the early 30's. In 1939, the German Foreign Office appropriated the idea as a proposed "solution" to the "Jewish problem," but dropped it after the invasion of the Soviet Union. An alternative plan was conceived in November 1939 to establish a reservation in the area of Lublin as a dumping ground for Jewish and non-Jewish

* Pantheon, 492 pp., $27.95.

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"destructive elements." German Jews were then being shipped to Poland, presumably to be incarcerated there. Early in 1940 the plan for a Lublin reservation was approved at the highest level, but no practical steps were ever taken to implement it. In April 1940 the plan was abandoned.

Still, the idea of resettlement, whether to Madagascar, a Lublin reservation, or beyond the Urals, remained in the repertory of Nazi propaganda, a tactic of deception to conceal the mass killings of Jews. Even Hitler, on July 22, 1941, when he knew that the Madagascar plan had already been dropped and that the *Einsatzgruppen* had already been given their instuctions, told Marshal Kvaternik, head of the Croatian armed forces, that it was a matter of indifference to him where the Jews were sent, whether to Siberia or to Madagascar. Soon thereafter, the SS routinely used the deceptive promise of resettlement "in the East" to lull the persecuted and terrorized Jews who were in fact being deported to killing camps. Today we are being asked once again to believe the propaganda about resettlement, this time by a university professor.

To support his scenario that the Germans never intended to murder the Jews, Mayer must somehow account for the massive operations of the four *Einsatzgruppen* on Soviet territory. He begins by claiming that "when they set forth on their mission, the *Einsatzgruppen* and the RSHA [Reich Central Security Office] were not given the extermination of Jews as their principal, let alone their only, assignment." That statement contradicts what has been known and documented for over forty years. License for the *Einsatzgruppen* to kill was written into the military orders for "Barbarossa," the code name for the invasion of Russia, issued March 13, 1941, and explicit orders were later given orally to murder Jews, Gypsies, and "commissars." The Round-up Report of *Einsatzgruppe A* for the period ending October 15, 1941, unambiguously states: ". . . in accordance with the basic orders, the mopping-up work of the Security Police had as its goal the annihilation, as comprehensive as possible, of the Jews."*

How does Mayer explain the fact that Jews began to be murdered as soon as the *Einsatzgruppen* entered Soviet territory? He has a ready answer: "Some of the first and for a time the worst outrages against the Jews were committed not by the new-model *Einsatzgruppen*, but by latter-day local pogromists in . . . Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia." And, "[i]n the early triumphant days of Barbarossa the Jewish massacres were the product of random pogroms rather than of an official plan or warrant for systematic genocide." In fact, however, those "random pogroms" were planned and instigated by the *Einsatzgruppen*. The evidence, which Mayer either does not know or chooses to ignore, is in the Round-up Report of *Einsatzgruppe A* quoted above:

> . . . in the first hours after our entry [Kovno June 25, 1941], even under considerable hardships, native anti-Semitic elements were induced to start pogroms against Jews. In conformity with orders, the Security Police was determined to solve the Jewish question with all means and full decisiveness. It was, however, desirable that the Security Police should not be visible, at least in the beginning, since the extraordinarily harsh measures would attract attention even in German circles. It had to be demonstrated to the world that the native population itself took the first measures by way of natural reaction against decades-long suppression by the Jews and against the terror exercised by the Communists in the preceding period.

We now come to the crux of Mayer's thesis—that only after "the breakdown of Barbarossa" did the Jews become, as he puts it, "the chosen martyrs of [Germany's] fiery crusade against Bolshevism." To prove this thesis, Mayer postdates the *Einsatzgruppen* killings and antedates the collapse of the German campaign in Russia. Following Adam's lead, Mayer settles on the fall of 1941 as his great divide. Until then, he insists, "the Nazi drive against the Jews remained indeterminate and erratic."

The real sequence of events was quite different. (Even a few of Mayer's functionalist colleagues have disputed his rigged timetable.) The Germans began the actual killing of the Jews in the summer of 1941. By September, *Einsatzgruppe C*, operating in the Ukraine, had already slaughtered tens of thousands, including some 34,000 in Kiev, shot *en masse* in two days at Babi Yar. By mid-October, *Einsatzgruppe A* had completed the first cycle of its killings in the Baltic and White Russia and had started a second cycle. According to the report cited above, the number of "executed persons" during the period from June to October 15, 1941, in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and White Russia, reached a total of 118,430 Jews and 3,387 Communists—hardly the result of an "indeterminate and erratic" drive. The disproportionate number of "executed" Jews (as against Bolsheviks) indicates well the priorities of the *Einsatzgruppen*.†

Nor does the evidence support Mayer's premature date for the breakdown of Barbarossa. He claims that Hitler and his generals knew they had failed to crush Russia as early as December 6, 1941, when Zhukov's counterassault relieved the siege of Moscow. But though the German generals may have been ready to quit during that perilous winter of 1941-42, Hitler refused to let them retreat. And his strategy worked—at least for another year. Though the Russians did manage to recapture a little territory in White Russia and the Ukraine in the spring of 1942, in a powerful counteroffensive the Germans retook those areas in July and then swept through the

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* Extracts from these field reports are in my book *A Holocaust Reader* (1976), pp. 89-96. No document has ever been found containing the "basic orders" referred to here. According to oral testimony given at the *Einsatzgruppen* trial in Nuremberg in 1945-46 by Otto Ohlendorf, commander of *Einsatzgruppe D*, and by others in postwar trials in West Germany, those orders were issued orally at the *Einsatzgruppen* training centers, in preparation for the invasion of the Soviet Union.

† For more on Mayer's falsification of *Einsatzgruppen* operations, see Daniel Jonah Goldhagen's informative review, "False Witness," *New Republic*, April 17, 1989.

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Ukraine and the Caucasus, penetrating as far east as Stalingrad by September. This German advance catastrophically reduced Russian agricultural supplies and threatened widespread famine, relieved only by the massive United States food shipments. Leningrad, meanwhile, under siege since September 1941, remained unrelieved until January 1943.

On account of Hitler's persistence, in other words, Barbarossa did not break down in December 1941, but a year later. By that time, the *Einsatzgruppen* had already murdered about two-thirds of the Jews in the area of their operations. The killing of the Jews was carried out as an operation parallel with the invasion of Russia; it was not a consequence of the failure of that invasion.

In a far-fetched historical analogy, Mayer compares the operations of the *Einsatzgruppen* with the First Crusade of 1095-99. (The title of his book is taken from a medieval Jewish chronicle about Jewish martyrdom in the Rhineland during that crusade.) Pope Urban II launched the crusade to liberate the holy land from the Muslim infidels. Marching across Europe, the Crusaders massacred the Jews en route, even though the Pope had not intended or ordered them to do so.

The analogy is absurd on several counts. For one thing, haphazard extemporaneous pogroms committed by the soldiers of Christ and by undisciplined hordes of peasants are not in any way comparable to a bureaucratically organized mass murder carried out by tightly structured and trained battalions which, when they completed their work, had killed about two million Jews. Nor, by any stretch of the historical imagination, can the Crusades be compared to the death camps, where millions of people—mostly Jews—were gassed and their corpses burned.

BUT this brings us to Auschwitz. How, if he insists that the Germans had no intention to murder the Jews, does Mayer deal with it? Ingeniously, he transforms the very nature of Auschwitz from a place whose name has become a byword for unspeakable evil and horror into a place where "more Jews were killed by so-called 'natural' causes then by 'unnatural ones.'" "Indeed," he adds, "ultimately the execrable living, sanitary, and working conditions in the concentration camps and ghettos took a greater toll of life than the willful executions and gassings in the extermination centers." To this breathtaking assertion, no comment would be adequate.

Mayer, who is in general cavalier about documentation, turns singularly scrupulous when it comes to the sources concerning Auschwitz, about which, he writes, "there is no denying the many contradictions, ambiguities, and errors." And further:

> Sources for the study of the gas chambers are at once rare and unreliable. . . . Most of what is known is based on the depositions of Nazi officials and executioners at postwar trials and on the memory of survivors and bystanders. This testimony must be screened carefully, since it can be influenced by subjective factors of great complexity.

But the sources for the "study of the gas chambers," consisting of official and personal documents by perpetrators and victims, are not any rarer or less reliable than for other historical events and periods. They are assuredly more numerous, more detailed, and more trustworthy than the sources for the history of the First Crusade, on which Mayer relies with total confidence. As for "subjective factors," the first lesson every graduate student learns about historical method is that *all* documentary sources have to be screened carefully for such factors.

"Both radical skepticism and rigid dogmatism about the exact processes of extermination and the exact number of victims, are the bane of sound historical interpretation," Mayer pontificates. Against whom is he taking aim in this enigmatic reference? Clues may be found both in his text and in his bibliography. Omitted, conspicuously, are two of the most authoritative eyewitness accounts of the death camps. One is the detailed report of operations at Auschwitz, complete with diagrams and statistics, compiled in the spring of 1944 by Alfred Weczler and Rudolf Vrba, two Slovakian Jews who had managed to escape and whose documented account, the first to reach the West, was published by the United States War Refugee Board late in 1944. The second is the testimony of Kurt Gerstein, an SS officer whose task was to deliver to Belžec and Treblinka the cyanide gas known as Zyklon B. Captured by the Allies after the war, Gerstein wrote two depositions of his activities, including his witnessing of actual gassings. Before he came to trial, he was found hanged in his cell.

There are those who have tried to discredit these documents, particularly Gerstein's, along with the rest of the substantial body of evidence of mass shootings and mass killings. Such persons come from the ranks of the deniers of the Holocaust, those who claim that the Germans never murdered any Jews or gassed human beings at Auschwitz. How extraordinary to find that Mayer's bibliography, innocent of reference to Gerstein or Weczler and Vrba, includes works by two of the most rabid deniers. One is *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, by Arthur Butz, and the other is a 1979 reprint of a book originally published in 1949 by Paul Rassinier, entitled *Le Mensonge d'Ulysse*. Rassinier, a former French Communist interned in Buchenwald during the war, turned rabidly anti-Semitic after liberation. He died in 1967, but his book, which denies that the Germans committed any atrocities against the Jews in the camps, was reprinted in 1979 by La Vielle Taupe, a leftist French publishing house. A year earlier, Robert Faurisson, then an associate professor of literature at a French university in Lyon, also began to publish essays about the "alleged gas chambers" and the "alleged genocide." An international scandal ensued, fueled by the efforts of some leftists connected with La Vielle Taupe, and seconded by Noam Chomsky, to defend Faurisson's rights to disseminate his ideas from the protected precincts of a university position.*

Is it possible that Mayer has these crackpots and other neo-Nazis in

* See my article, "Lies About the Holocaust," COMMENTARY, December 1980.

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mind when, with Olympian detachment, he admonishes against "radical skepticism" as a bane "of sound historical interpretation"? If so, does his second bane, "rigid dogmatism," then apply to those survivors and historians who stick to their conviction that six million is a realistic estimate of the number of Jews murdered by the Germans? This would be historical even-handedness with a vengeance.

IN SETTING out to interpret the murder of the European Jews as the fortuitous by-product of the Nazi state's crusade against international Communism, Mayer excises the unique complex of racial ideas that fueled Hitler and his Germany, demonizes Hitler and normalizes his dictatorship, and substitutes rational political goals for the Nazis' fanatically racist agenda. Though he has taken a different political route to get there, Mayer ends up with much the same view of the Nazi regime as that held by right-wing German scholars like Ernst Nolte, who try to justify the Nazi regime by arguing the necessity of crushing Communist Russia.

In declaring early in his book that it is time to revise, reappraise, and historicize the European "Judeocide," Mayer calls upon historians to "abandon the vantage point of the cold war" and discard "residual cold-war blinders." By the cold war, however, Mayer does not mean what we commonly define as the struggle for power and influence between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies after World War II, when the Soviet Union established its hegemony over Eastern Europe. Rather, Mayer's cold war dates back to the Bolshevik Revolution and is a war "between change and resistance to change, between optimism and pessimism, dawn and dusk." What Bolshevism represents to Mayer is clearly stated in the opening pages of his earlier book, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*:

> Historians . . . will also keep trying to penetrate the agony and ferocity of the Bolshevik Revolution and regime, *which were the main ray of hope during one of Europe's darkest nights.* Russia was fatally caught up in this colossal turbulence, sacrificing more blood and patrimony than any other nation. Paradoxically, though peripheral to Western civilization, Russia was nevertheless among its greatest destabilizers and *ultimate saviors.* [Emphasis added]

Mayer further insists that the "Judeocide" be placed "in its pertinent historical setting." As we have seen, however, he does not locate that setting within the framework of German history or in a matrix of German nationalism and racist anti-Semitism. Mayer has in mind a grander design, already drawn in his previous book as "the Thirty Years' War of the general crisis of the 20th century." In his new book, too, Mayer compares the thirty-year period of 1914-45 with the religious conflicts of the Thirty Years' War of 1618-48, but now he defines the modern period as "the climacteric of the ideological struggle between fascism and Bolshevism."

Finally, Mayer insists on "an overarching interpretative construct" to explain both "the Jewish catastrophe and the historical circumstances in which it occurred." Stripped of its intellectual pretension, this "construct" turns out to be, once again, the ideological struggle between fascism and Bolshevism. And an integral element in that construct is what can only be called apologetics for the Stalinist regime and *its* treatment of the Jews.

Thus, Mayer describes the Jewish communities of interwar Europe in Marxist terms of class differentiation and occupational structure, while neglecting all the other complex social elements and institutions which those communities had created to preserve their Jewish heritage and ensure their continuity. Waxing lyrical, he tells us how the Soviet Union modernized and acculturated the Russian Jews—glossing over the Bolsheviks' utter destruction of the religious, cultural, communal, and political institutions which, for decades and centuries, had embodied the Russian Jews' commitment to tradition and their aspirations for the future.

Thus, too, Mayer repeatedly justifies the Hitler-Stalin pact, not only as "Moscow's strategy of gaining time and space for the inevitable Nazi-Soviet showdown"—this could more appropriately be said of Hitler's strategy than of Stalin's—but also for its "fortuitously redeeming features" where the Jews were concerned. How so? Because by "securing"—i.e., annexing—eastern Poland, Stalin "momentarily kept 300,000 Jews from falling under the Nazi heel." Elsewhere, Mayer writes that the Nazi-Soviet pact was "a partial and disguised blessing" to the Jews as it kept them "temporarily" out of German hands, and that "Stalin inadvertently saved large numbers of not only Polish but also, later, Soviet Jews." The index to this book even contains an entry—"Jews, salvation of"—referring to the material cited here.

Now, it has long been shown that the Soviet regime made no effort to evacuate endangered Jews. Moreover, by suppressing the grim truth about Nazi anti-Jewish policies, the Soviets rendered the Russian Jews even more vulnerable to the Nazi onslaught. But to bring up such facts would no doubt be to betray one's commitment to the "vantage point of the cold war," just as to insist on the cardinal element of murderous intentionality in the Nazi war against the Jews would be to overlook or slight what to Mayer is the greater tragedy by far, the fascist war against "optimism" and "dawn."

A contemporary German scholar recently extolled the practice of history as a means of tearing down the walls of self-deception that people erect around themselves. History, he wrote, confronts us with the truth about the past, thus saving us from the distortions of personal prejudice and political ideology. Arno Mayer has done the reverse, conscripting history into the service of ideology, reinforcing the walls of self-deception. That his book has met with a generally cordial reception is a sign of the casual, or, worse, ignorant and indulgent standards prevailing these days in the historical profession.

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The Dark Art

DECEPTION: THE INVISIBLE WAR BETWEEN THE KGB AND THE CIA. By EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN. *Simon & Schuster. 336 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ELIOT A. COHEN

DECEPTION is a seductive subject, as any magician worth his salt knows. It is not true that all people love being fooled, but they do seem to enjoy watching someone fool others. When deception is applied to something less innocuous than mere entertainment, and particularly to national security, however, reactions differ. For some, deception is the key to understanding how the Soviet Union deals with the West; for others, interest in the subject is at best an irrelevance, at worst a straight path to paranoia and paralysis.

Edward Jay Epstein's new book sympathizes with the first group, those who believe that Soviet deception operations are pervasive and generally successful, that American intelligence agencies and the Central Intelligence Agency in particular have been woefully naive in their appreciation of the problem, and that the Soviets have become ever more skilled in these dark arts over the last seventy years. The hero of his tale is the late James Jesus Angleton, the longtime head of CIA counterintelligence who was fired in 1974. Angleton, whom Epstein interviewed on a number of occasions, was one of the old school—a product of Yale who entered the CIA's precursor, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), during World War II. A tall, thin, sharp-faced man, he was a linguist, a minor poet, and a connoisseur of fine orchids—the latter hobby having more relevance to his professional life than one might think.

At the CIA Angleton became an exceedingly controversial figure, for his office was charged, *inter alia*, with establishing the bona fides of new agents and the interrogation of defectors. Normally, there was bound to be tension between those who ran defectors and agents, making their careers by providing hot information to policy-makers, and the counterintelligence staff, whose job it was to question the credibility of those sources. In Angleton's case, however, the problem assumed extraordinary proportions, because he became convinced that the Soviets had penetrated the CIA, and that several major defectors were fakes. Relying in large part on the testimony of Anatoly Golitsyn, a KGB major who defected to the West in 1961, he insisted on disputing the credentials of Yuri Nosenko, a particularly important defector who arrived in the West barely two months after the assassination of President Kennedy. Nosenko, among other things, had informed the CIA that Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's assassin, had had nothing to do with Soviet intelligence. Angleton believed that Nosenko was a fake, part of an intricate plot to convince the Americans of this story and others. Epstein has given this version of events in other books, and it must be said that of all those who doubt the standard account of the Kennedy assassination, he is the most reasonable.

The description of Angleton's theories, and even more so of the man himself, is the best part of Epstein's new book. Epstein found him a fascinating and charming man, and his further researches brought him into increasing sympathy with his views. Although Angleton and his opinions are the thread that ties the book together, Epstein roams through many related subjects. He discusses the history of Soviet deception operations and particularly the Trust, a brilliant 1920's-era scam that snookered not only anti-Communist Soviet émigrés but Western intelligence agencies, which ended up bankrolling the Soviet secret police. He covers several more recent cases as well, including Soviet fakery that misled the West into underestimating the accuracy of Soviet missiles, and the spectacular defection and redefection of Vitaliy Yurchenko, who Epstein thinks was a fake from the beginning.

Epstein also touches on academic theories of deception and the history of deception more generally, including its successful use by both the Allies and the Axis powers in World War II. He picks up on three particularly important points made by serious students of deception. First, most deception is self-deception, i.e., requires the reinforcement of preexisting beliefs in the target country or organization, rather than the creation of new ones. Anglo-American deception before D-Day worked in large part because the Germans thought that the Pas de Calais (the notional objective of the phantom armies created by the deception planners) was the best place for the Allies to land. Secondly, successful deception requires continuous monitoring of the opponent's world view—something the Allies could do in 1944 because of their tremendous successes in breaking German ciphers. Thirdly, deception requires a certain amount of cooperation between deceiver and deceived. It is quite remarkable how often intelligence-agency investigations of deception or security compromise are conducted by those who have most to lose from uncovering them. Thus, the German navy nearly stumbled across Allied successes in breaking the U-boats' cipher systems, but they assigned the task of evaluating the ciphers to those who had constructed them—and who could not accept that they could be broken.

Epstein tells his stories well, and he is particularly effective when he sketches contemporary vignettes which would be funny if their subject were not so serious. He quotes a leading CIA expert on deception as declaring that the CIA has a

ELIOT A. COHEN *is the co-author of* Military Misfortunes, *which will be published by the Free Press in 1990.*

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sure-fire test for deception, because it knows that the KGB would never provide the West with secret documents. Adherence to such iron-clad rules, of course, is a good way to set oneself up for deception. Epstein traces the reluctance on the part of many intelligence officials to admit that their agencies can be deceived, as if gullibility were not a universal human trait. He justly criticizes the American intelligence community for an overweening faith in the ability of sophisticated technologies to make the Soviet Union an open book, although perhaps he gives the signals- and imagery-intelligence capabilities of this country less credit than they deserve.

Epstein concludes the book with a particularly dramatic assessment of Soviet policy today. He maintains that *glasnost* and *perestroika* are merely the sixth Soviet attempt to fool the West into familiar kinds of miscomprehension. The Soviet economy, he claims, is not nearly as badly off (for war production, that is) as its detractors imagine. The Soviets have pretended to liberalize before in order to lull their opponents into passivity or active cooperation, and as always they look to Western capitalists to "sell them the rope"—on credit—with which the Communists will hang them. Gorbachev's reforms, in short, are nothing more than the Trust deception all over again, but on an infinitely grander scale and, perhaps, with more dangerous consequences.

EPSTEIN'S clear and vivid style, and his reasonableness in pursuing an extreme hypothesis, make his book intriguing and thought-provoking. Nevertheless, his fundamental thesis is simply not tenable. The crisis in the Soviet economy, public-health system, and indeed the entire polity is apparent to visitors, and confirmed by many sources of information, not just the odd defector here or there. It corresponds to the views held by knowledgeable and indubitably anti-Communist émigrés, who have argued against CIA experts, as well as Soviet ones, that the Soviet economy was in parlous shape. The measures taken by the Soviet authorities—permitting the public criticism even of Lenin, the publication of works by such anti-Communist writers as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and Vasily Grossman, and the expression of ethnic chauvinism—have such profound long-term costs that it is hard to imagine what payoffs can compensate for them. More to the point, Epstein's hypothesis assumes that the Soviets are capable of mounting a unified, monumentally complicated, and carefully planned deception in virtually all walks of life. Yet no totalitarian regime—not even that of the Soviet Union—can create a simulacrum of such social changes, taking in thousands of visitors, émigrés, and diplomats as well as the modern information-gathering technologies of the most technically advanced society in the world.

This is not to say that the Soviets are not, and have not been, great

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deceivers and manipulators. They most certainly are, and Epstein's book is as good a way as any of appreciating their skill in this field. But deception has intrinsic limits. For one thing, as Machiavelli noted, the larger the conspiracy the greater the chance that it will be compromised by carelessness, failures of communication, or betrayal. The coordination of as massive a campaign as that in which Epstein claims to believe would be an organizational feat of staggering proportions. This is particularly true because it would have to affect many channels of information. During World War II the Allies did indeed fool the Germans about the time and place of the invasion of France, but consider the following. The Germans had no aerial reconnaissance over the British Isles, save when permitted such by the overwhelmingly superior Allied air forces; they were at a gross disadvantage in signals intelligence, with little to compensate for ULTRA (the code name for Anglo-American decryption of their radio traffic); they had *no* independent agents in Great Britain—all were being run as double agents by the British; the British press was thoroughly censored; and foreign travelers (including from neutral countries) were carefully controlled.

TODAY, despite the many advantages that accrue to the scope of the Soviet espionage effort, the cunning and ruthlessness of the Soviet intelligence community, and the credulity of the West, the fact is that deception on this scale is probably not in the cards. *Glasnost* and *perestroika* may succumb to a Communist reaction or a new and equally unsavory brand of Russian chauvinist fascism, but they are not deception, nor is the crisis in Soviet society a fake. In most of the world Communism is a dead ideology, mouthed by leaders because it legitimates their rule (although that is changing) and because they cannot comprehend anything else. As a few observers have long contended, the stolid immobility of Communist regimes conceals societies in tumult, and once that churning instability breaks through the crust of order—as it has in China—no one can tell where it might lead.

But simply because Soviet macro-deception is implausible does not mean that micro-deceptions do not occur. In fact, as Soviet theorists have long argued, it is frequently enough to deceive an opponent with respect to one or two key attributes of an operation or weapon system. The Soviets can and do mislead their Western opponents. They are extraordinarily adroit in concealing their full military capabilities, as the treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces revealed: open-source estimates of Soviet missile strengths were shown to be off, in some cases by at least a factor of five. And there can be no doubt the the Soviets will manipulate European (and to a lesser extent American) public opinion in order to enfeeble the alliance that has opposed them and gain access to Western technology and expertise. Whether those successes will compensate for the rot of the Soviet economy and society, or the eruption of violent discontent the length and breadth of the Soviet empire, is another matter.

One's assessment of the short-term effectiveness of Soviet deception depends crucially upon the details of many of the cases that Epstein presents, and in most instances neither he nor his readers will have access to the documentation that they would need to come to balanced judgments. In some cases Epstein's research appears a bit thin (he makes no use of the superb official history of British intelligence in World War II or some of the standard studies of Soviet deception, for example). In others, he makes small but unsettling factual errors—referring to a common military explosive, C-4, as "a special CIA mixture," for instance, or describing a well-known defense intellectual fiddling with an endearingly unlightable pipe when the individual in question does not take tobacco in any form. But these are quibbles. Epstein tells his stories well, and in the largest part, accurately. Those who read *Deception* may come away unconvinced, but if it makes them uneasy, it will have performed a major service.

Hijacking the UN

A MANDATE FOR TERROR: THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE PLO. By HARRIS OKUN SCHOENBERG. *Shapolsky Publishers. 570 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by ALLAN GERSON

"TO AVOID misunderstandings," writes Harris Schoenberg in the preface to this important scholarly work, "I wish to stress that while I find much that is wrong with the United Nations in the late 1980's, even beyond its legitimization of international terrorism, I am committed . . . not to its destruction but to its reform." Schoenberg then devotes almost 600 pages of careful documentation to an overwhelming brief in support of his central point: that nearly all aspects of the United Nations have been "coopted" by the PLO and "petropowered radicals," and that the provisions of the United Nations Charter dealing with non-use of force have been bent out of shape by reinterpretations legitimizing the use of all means, including terror, in the struggle for liberation from "alien, colonial, and racist" rule—i.e., Israel.

After showing how, by virtue of its own covenant, its origins, and its strategy, the PLO is committed to terror, and after recounting the familiar story of Yasir Arafat's 1974 arrival and reception in New York, Schoenberg demonstrates in detail the anomalous process by which the PLO, nominally an observer mission at the UN, came to receive better treatment there than a member state. In brief, writes Schoenberg, "Promoting the PLO" "became a UN growth industry." The Secretariat in particular was turned into the PLO's "Ministry of Propaganda," distributing pro-PLO films, staging exhibitions in the

ALLAN GERSON, *resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of* Israel, The West Bank, and International Law *(Cass, 1978) and was counsel to the U.S. delegation to the United Nations from 1981 to 1985. His new book on the politics of international law is scheduled for publication in spring 1990.*

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visitors' gallery, convening international conferences on the question of Palestine, holding ongoing seminars, and creating a Special Unit on Palestinian Rights to help orchestrate the entire operation. The industry's activity extended to the "rape" of the women's-rights conferences held by the United Nations in 1975, 1980, and 1985, and to the "cooption" of UNIFIL, the United Nations' peacekeeping forces in Lebanon, which were unable to prevent PLO infiltration because the UN refused to remove PLO camps from UNIFIL territory.

Schoenberg has kinder words for three UN-related agencies—the UN Development Program (under Director Brad Morse), the International Monetary Fund, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Unlike the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which he also discusses, these agencies did not permit themselves to be politicized by the PLO.

When it comes to the international consequences of the UN-PLO "interaction," Schoenberg takes Castro's Cuba as his main example. In 1963, hard as it may be to imagine now, two days of national mourning were staged in Cuba on the death of Israel's President, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. Ten years later, at the Fourth Summit Conference of Nonaligned States held in Algiers, Castro joined those bent on vilifying Israel. Schoenberg speculates that his motives had to do with purchasing "Arab toleration of his role as Moscow's spokesman" and improving his chances "for Arab support to be chairman of the Nonaligned." But there were also forces tugging him in this direction at the UN itself, specifically the Nonaligned Movement and the Soviet Union, with their strong predilection for the Arab cause.

Similarly, in discussing the ill-fated efforts of the then-U.S. ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, to open a "dialogue" with the PLO in New York in 1979, Schoenberg suggests that it was Young's pacifism that prevented him from seeing the ways in which PLO "violence was often a calculated strategy, not merely the result of 'desperation,' as Young often claimed." Perhaps so—but once again UN institutional pressures must have played a part, in this case inducing discomfort at being out of line with the thinking of the majority.

FROM his extensive documentation, Schoenberg draws a series of conclusions, most notably that the UN today is still a "forum for fanaticism." But he remains hopeful of change for the better, mainly on two grounds. The first has to do with what he sees as the shifting interests of the parties involved. By 1987, he writes,

> The petropowers had been weakened and the oil weapon blunted. The radicals had, at least temporarily, lost control of the Nonaligned Movement which they exercised from 1973 to 1983. The Arab states were divided over the

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Iran-Iraq war, Islamic fundamentalism versus secularism, the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, and acceptance or rejection of Israel, among other issues. The PLO was dispersed and split. And the Western countries, particularly the United States, enjoyed in the first half of the 1980's stronger economies and more vigorous governments than in the decade before.

This is all true, as far as it goes. But it was not mere political expediency or the clout of petrodollars that was responsible for the PLO's rise to power at the UN. Throughout the last decade, the vast majority of the world's nations, including the Western nations, had come to espouse the belief that the PLO held the answer to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It was, for example, France and Egypt—no "petropowered radicals"—that introduced an important 1982 initiative calling for mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO and the creation of an independent PLO state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. And it was a key European representative who told the American delegation at the time: "The PLO has been destroyed militarily. If you allow it to be destroyed politically as well, there will be no chance for peace."

TODAY, far from having broken up, this international consensus is stronger than ever. And that brings us to Schoenberg's second dubious ground for hopefulness. Schoenberg's book ends with the decision of then-Secretary of State George Shultz in late fall 1988 to deny Yasir Arafat's request for an entry visa to address the UN General Assembly, and with the subsequent U.S. vote at the General Assembly session in Geneva to stand alone (with Israel) against recognition of an independent Palestinian Arab state as proclaimed by the PLO. A buoyant Schoenberg concludes: "In the end it was the United States, not the UN, that canceled the PLO's mandate for terror." Yet a scant two weeks later, a "dialogue" had been opened between the U.S. and the PLO, and this time Yasir Arafat had it right: it was not the PLO that had changed its policy, but the United States. In the end it did not so much "cancel" the PLO's mandate as help to legitimize the PLO, not as a terrorist organization but as a putative peacemaker.

The United Nations is neither a religion nor a cause (although many treat it as such), but a forum. It is a reflection—skewed, perhaps—of world views. In the case of the PLO, rather than being the object of a hijacking, the UN played a role that more often ranged from willing partner to instigator. What this portends for the possibility of reform that Schoenberg persists in holding out, or for the capacity of the United States to withstand pressure on behalf of profoundly anti-Western radical movements, is something future historians will have to decide. In the meantime, we can be grateful to Harris Schoenberg for a book which, even if it does not fully explain why things happened as they did, brilliantly illuminates the record of their occurrence.

Ballads for Americans

MY SONG IS MY WEAPON: PEOPLE'S SONGS, AMERICAN COMMUNISM, AND THE POLITICS OF CULTURE, 1930-50. By ROBBIE LIEBERMAN. *University of Illinois Press. 201 pp. $23.95.*

Reviewed by RONALD RADOSH

THIS book is perhaps the strangest example yet of what Theodore Draper has called the "curious academic campaign for the rehabilitation of American Communism." Robbie Lieberman, a New Left academic and the daughter of an Old Left folk singer, concentrates here on the discovery by the Communist party of American folk music and the subsequent attempt to exploit it politically through an organization called People's Songs. Created during World War II in the heyday of the party's influence, People's Songs managed to get the support of such musical luminaries as the composers Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, and Marc Blitzstein, as well as the active participation of performers like Paul Robeson, Earl Robinson, and—most importantly—Pete Seeger.

The author begins by tracing the origins of the CP's interest in folk music. During the ultra-sectarian Third Period (1928-35), when Communists thought that America was on the verge of revolution, the Composers Collective, which included Blitzstein, Robinson, and Charles Seeger (Pete's father), rejected American folk song as, in the words of the elder Seeger, "complacent, melancholy, defeatist, intended to make slaves endure their lot." But with the advent of the Popular Front (1935-39 and 1941-46), and as part of its new campaign to make an alliance with the formerly despised liberal enemy, the party began to herald folk music as an "accessible form in which to express revolutionary ideas." As the party's leading cultural popularizer Michael Gold explained, the time had come to "write catchy tunes that any American worker can sing and like." Or, as Lieberman writes:

> Emotional and intellectual responses to folk music took place, then, in the context of the search for American roots, in labor organizing, in anti-fascist campaigns, and at left-wing summer camps. Perhaps the most important and lasting effect of the Popular Front in the cultural realm was the identification of the "folk" with left-wing politics, an identification that persisted both inside and outside the Communist movement.

Of course, as in other realms in which Communists were involved, an overriding commitment to the Soviet Union superseded any efforts to sink roots in America. The author herself admits, for example, that the "democratic spirit that defined Popular Front Communism in the U.S. turned out to be temporary," and was "abruptly discarded . . . when Stalin signed the nonaggression pact with Hitler in 1939." Pete Seeger may indeed have sought throughout his career to promote "Popular Front politics

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RONALD RADOSH, *co-author of* The Rosenberg File, *is currently writing a book about the Democratic party since the 1960's. His first published article appeared in* Sing Out! *in 1959.*

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using folk-style song as a weapon," but with Seeger, as with any devoted Communist cadre, obedience to the party line of the moment came first.

HERE, the story of the Almanac Singers is most instructive. Composed of Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Lee Hays, Butch Hawes, and Millard Lampell, the Almanacs were the very first bona-fide American folk group. Much to their consternation, their first album, *Songs for John Doe,* recorded in March 1941, was released during the very week in June when Nazi Germany broke its pact with Stalin and invaded the USSR. The album, which (following the line the party had adopted after the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact) condemned FDR as a warmongering fascist and called for keeping American troops home, was withdrawn by the singers, and the few individuals who had already purchased copies were asked to return them. After a brief hiatus, the Almanacs reappeared, singing songs which, in keeping with the new party line, promoted anti-fascist unity and war. Even their most famous labor song—"Talkin' Union"—was ditched, as the party (with victory in a war in which the U.S. was allied with the Soviet Union now the uppermost consideration) pursued a no-strike pledge and business-labor cooperation.

Having recounted this episode, however, and having acknowledged that the Almanacs' work "unapologetically reinforced the Communist world view," Lieberman writes that they were "not responding to Comintern or CP-USA directives when they changed their repertoire to match a new political situation." This may be literally true, but the point she misses is that the young members of the Almanacs had no need for a formal order—they voluntarily crushed any doubts they may have harbored to follow every new twist of the party line.

Indeed, Lieberman argues in general that the party kept its hands off the folk singers (in contrast to how, as she acknowledges, it operated in the realm of literature). During the war years, when the party line was indistinguishable from that of the broad Left/liberal/labor coalition behind FDR, such permissiveness was possible. But numerous examples from the cold-war epoch—a period which Lieberman fails to explore—tell a different story.

Thus, with the adoption in 1947 of a harder line on domestic issues that echoed Stalin's moves toward confrontation with the U.S., the broad-based People's Songs was dissolved and replaced with a group called People's Artists, which emphasized such songs as "Put My Name Down Brother, Where Do I Sign?" (about the Soviet-sponsored Stockholm Peace Petition). The new organization was administered by an apparatchik named Irwin Silber, who also took over as editor-in-chief of its magazine *Sing Out!*, where he launched a campaign against folk singers like Burl Ives, Tom Glazer, Josh White, and Oscar Brand, who refused to adopt the new line. Brand in particular was accused of "join[ing] the witch hunters," and it was falsely suggested that he had named names before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

Not even the faithful Pete Seeger and his new group the Weavers were safe. In the pages of *Sing Out!* they were attacked simply for being an all-white group singing songs of black America and being therefore guilty of "white chauvinism." Lieberman contends that People's Artists was simply trying to protest the "commercial exploitation of black culture by the entertainment industry"—and there was, of course, such crass exploitation, particularly by white artists who took over black songs and then got all the credit and money. (The classic example is Pat Boone's "covering" of Fats Domino.) But the CP's "white-chauvinism" campaign was not about this. Rather, it was a witch hunt which, as the ex-

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Communist historian Joseph Starobin has pointed out, "wrecked the lives of tens of thousands between 1949 and 1953."

IN SPITE of all this, Lieberman insists that the party produced something of great value in the area of folk music. Sectarian and pro-Soviet as the party may have been, it promoted "traditional, rural, and folk music and topical songs in opposition to . . . corrupt, mindless popular culture." Out of this came a vision of "an alternative future"—a "counter-hegemonic" challenge to the system that transcended the party's narrow political agenda and that remains vital today.

Ironically, however, the current popularity of rural and folk music points to the very opposite of a commitment to political radicalism. In fact, the most popular such singers today—Loretta Lynn, Ricki Skaggs, Randy Travis, and Merle Haggard—are by and large politically conservative, and many of them are fundamentalist Christians. Even when they are found singing the very same Popular Front songs heralded by Lieberman as a challenge to the system—during the last presidential campaign, for instance, Crystal Gale, appearing with George Bush, regularly serenaded the crowds with Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land"—they turn them into straightforwardly patriotic anthems. Similarly, when at the Statue of Liberty centennial, with Ronald Reagan at the podium, the orchestra played "Ballad for Americans," hardly anyone in the audience would have dreamed that the composer of that song, Earl Robinson, once told Lieberman that its implicit message was the old Popular Front slogan, "Communism is 20th-century Americanism."

As for the Popular Front tradition itself, it still has a few adherents who seek to reaffirm the Old Left, particularly Peter, Paul, and Mary, who along with the California folk-rock singer Jackson Browne use their talents to sing the praises of the Sandinistas, and to condemn American foreign policy. But for the most part, the tradition lies dormant, living on only in the minds of the unreconstructed Old Left and their New Left academic offspring.

Preserving the Peace

WAR: ENDS AND MEANS. By PAUL SEABURY and ANGELO CODEVILLA. *Basic Books. 306 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by
AMBROSE EVANS-PRITCHARD

AMERICAN political culture lacks a discriminating discourse on the nature of war, its varieties, its causes and purposes, its uses as an instrument of policy. In order to help break this "spell of ignorance," as they put it, Paul Seabury and Angelo Codevilla, respectively a professor of political science at Berkeley and a senior fellow of the Hoover Institution, have written a sort of *librum belli* for the lay reader.

Unfortunately, the book is not as persuasive as it could be. The authors jump from century to century, dipping into the Punic Wars and the exploits of Cesare Borgia (one of their favorites) to support flying generalizations. Nor do they quite have the fluency in history to carry this off. Leaving aside errors in dates and details, there are some dubious assertions about, to take a number of instances, the nature of British rule in India, about the course of Asian history, and, closer to home, about the American economy.

But the main thesis of the book—namely, that only by thinking hard about the possibility of war, about its ends *and* its means, can we hope to ensure the possibility of peace—is both energetically argued and compelling. It is also singularly unfashionable, at a time when peace is considered an end in itself, to be secured at any cost. During last year's presidential election campaign, candidates—Jack Kemp was an exception—outdid one another in offering banal assurances about peace to hearty applause from their audiences. Yet as Seabury and Codevilla argue, since 1900 peace has been a bigger killer than war, mostly as a result of genocide by totalitarian governments. There may still be people in the world—the Israelis come to mind—who understand that in order to avoid such a peace they may have to choose war. But in Western Europe and the United States those with a similar understanding are few indeed.

On their way to documenting their major thesis the authors make many important and cold-eyed points about the likely nature of war in the future. Thus, according to Seabury and Codevilla, nuclear weapons have become so accurate that they can now be used selectively as elements of a war-fighting strategy rather than simply as tokens of mutually suicidal intentions. Such weapons are, in fact, an extremely efficient way of delivering explosive power at whatever level is needed, and at low yields the collateral damage they cause can be less than the effects of American and British bombing raids in World War II. Relatively small howitzers deployed on the Central European front could fire nuclear shells with a yield of one kiloton to disable enemy troops within a radius of 1,000 feet, not much more than a city block. They could also be used to prevent massed tank attack, or, like old-fashioned artillery, to clear a path for an assault by troops in anti-contamination suits.

In short, there is no longer a threshold between conventional and nuclear weapons. The two categories are already fully integrated and can be deployed together in all kinds of mixes. Yet this, as Seabury and Codevilla stress, is not understood in the Western democracies, where the myth persists that a single red button is all that lies between the survival and the extinction of mankind.

Even American military planners have been slow to adapt, with the result that American capability on land has become seriously jeopardized. While, for example, Soviet and Israeli battlefield intelligence centers are either mobile or bunkered, American systems remain sitting ducks to the new

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generations of accurate missiles. This would not be so critical if the U.S. had proper air defenses, but Washington has twisted itself into knots over the question of anti-missile defense while the Soviets, by contrast, are already deploying mobile SA-12s that can intercept a cruise missile in flight.

The vulnerability of ships, air bases, command-and-control centers, etc. puts a premium on preemptive attack. "The ability of nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles to destroy much of the defender's infrastructure and thus prejudice the outcome of a war in its opening minutes is an enormous incentive to shoot first." If the authors are correct about this, we may be headed toward disaster, as social-democratic parties in Western Europe have latched on to the facile concept of a purely "defensive defense," which would deny NATO the capability of an immediate counterattack, the only chance of saving the day.

The belief underlying this drift, Seabury and Codevilla write, is that wars are caused by misunderstandings rather than by calculated aggression, and can therefore be avoided by efforts to overcome such misunderstandings by assuaging the supposedly aggrieved party. There may be occasions when this is in fact the case, but the 20th century has mostly shown that when democracies make unilateral gestures to militaristic regimes, it either has no effect or incites them to further belligerence. "When we build they build, when we stop they build," remarked then-Secretary of Defense Harold Brown apropos the Soviet response to the military budgets of the Carter administration. Something similar had happened during the Anglo-German naval rivalry before World War I, when the liberal government in Britain halved the production of Dreadnoughts in the mistaken belief that the German naval build-up was a defensive reaction. As for World War II, the catastrophe of appeasing Hitler speaks for itself.

Only deterrence prevents conflict with hostile regimes bent on changing the status quo, and the art of deterrence consists in being believed. In a very good chapter on political warfare, Seabury and Codevilla recount the repeated failure of the United States either to take credible measures or to inspire fear that such measures would be taken. A pitiful example of this occurred when President Carter ordered a squadron of F-15 fighters to the Persian Gulf in order to bolster the Saudis after the Iranian revolution in 1979, but sent them unarmed so as not to give offense. In Vietnam the problem was different: the United States committed more than enough weaponry to crush the North Vietnamese but did not use it with a clear will to win. America has acquired a reputation for not seeing through its commitments, and one defeat invites the next, from Nicaragua to the Middle East.

WHAT about the conviction that war has become obsolete? The notion that man is becoming too civilized for another major war has been popping up for the last couple of millennia. It became the intellectual credo of the 1920's and 1930's after the Great War, the "war to end all wars." Yet even before this fatal delusion had reached its apogee, the world had already fallen prey to two of the greatest monsters in human history. A generation later we hear the same talk about the impossibility of war, this time on account of commerce, travel, instant communication, the shrinking globe, and other such factors that have supposedly brought us together and are putting an end to the misunderstandings that used to "cause" wars. And if all that is not enough, there is now the myth of the terminal threat posed by nuclear weapons.

But no weapons will ever keep the peace. So long as man remains the natural predator of other men, *homo homini lupus*, the only hope for avoiding war—as Paul Seabury and Angelo Codevilla demon-

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The Thinker as Everyman

A WORLD OF IDEAS. By BILL MOYERS. *Doubleday. 513 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES GARDNER

A *WORLD OF IDEAS*, the series of interviews that Bill Moyers conducted on PBS last winter, has now been gathered together in book form. This new format is generally more satisfying than the original broadcasts because it permits us to study more closely those arguments that possess real substance, and to skip over much cant and attitudinizing. Thus, while the broadcasts were generally duller than polite people were willing to concede at the time, these transcripts do provide some moments of genuine intelligence and illumination.

The book consists of forty-two "conversations with thoughtful men and women about American life today and the ideas shaping our future." It is divided into two parts, "Our Changing American Values" and "American Values in the New Global Society." The roster of names is remarkably and perhaps even shrewdly comprehensive, containing not only celebrities but also many personalities from science and law who are apt to be unfamiliar to most readers. Feminists, blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and even Canadians will find no reason to feel left out, while conservatives, who are not always well served by public television, will be comforted that writers like Peter Berger and John Lukacs have been included. The only significant omissions would seem to be musicians and visual artists, and with the glaring exception of Noam Chomsky, controversial political spokesmen from the far Left or the far Right.

In general, these interviews are most valuable when the subjects have some very specific expertise to bring to the discussion, and when they are allowed to use that expertise in all its specificity: the pediatrician T. Berry Brazelton on contemporary child care, Arturo Madrid on the condition of Hispanics, and William Julius Wilson on the condition of blacks in contemporary America. However, the interviews are most entertaining when their subjects turn out to be live wires whom Moyers, despite his best efforts to the contrary, cannot contain within his narrow orbit: men like Tom Wolfe and Isaac Asimov who, bless him, seems sublimely oblivious of all the contemporary orthodoxies to which "thoughtful people" are supposed to subscribe.

Least interesting of all, and unfortunately in the majority, are those "thoughtful" people whom Moyers has obviously selected because they intuitively share his own leftist centrism, generalists who are theoretically "interesting" but who in fact could not invent a genuinely provocative statement if they set their minds to it for weeks in advance: F. Forrester Church, pastor; Vartan Gregorian, president of Brown University; Sara Lawrence Lightfoot, educator; and many more.

THE popular success of *A World of Ideas*, as of most of the other projects with which Bill Moyers has been associated over the years, evidently results from the distinctive chemistry generated among the three parts in the equation—Moyers, his subjects, and his audience. It is this equation that, ultimately, is the most interesting aspect of what, with only slight exaggeration, may legitimately be called "the Moyers phenomenon."

The first and most essential component of the equation is, of course, Moyers himself. For many Moyers addicts who are more interested in the interviewer than in his subjects or what they are saying, the present volume is likely to be something of a disappointment—this, for the very reason that the book is superior to the telecasts, namely that Moyers, who was irremovably omnipresent on the screen, imposes himself far less in print. Yet even in print Moyers—the Thinker as Everyman—remains a presence, and his addicts will get some measure of the fix they came for in this volume.

What is perhaps most striking and least obvious about Moyers is his utter mirthlessness. A Southerner who is ever eager to invoke his deeply religious upbringing, Moyers seems to take everything absolutely in earnest. Here is a man without ironies, for whom the opportunity to discuss ideas is "truly joyous."

In one of his earlier and most successful endeavors, *The Power of Myth*, Moyers interviewed the mythologist Joseph Campbell, who had much to say about the power of archetypes. Those meditations seemed especially pregnant to Moyers, no doubt because he himself traffics conspicuously in archetypes.

Thus—and here we come to the second component of the equation—so many of the personages included in *A World of Ideas* seem to be there not because they have any intriguing or important or original ideas to express, but because they conform obediently to one of several archetypes of what Moyers apparently imagines a thinker looks and sounds like.

There is, for example, the patriarchal Grand Old Man, the exalted father figure, embodied in the historians Henry Steele Commager and James MacGregor Burns, and the literary critic Northrop Frye. There are those elegant, soft-spoken "Noble Savages" like the Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe and the Caribbean poet Derek Walcott. There is the slightly oddball and alarmingly hirsute Jewish Explainer, represented by the novelists E.L. Doctorow and Joseph Heller, who are called upon to provide a kind of comedic interlude to the more ponderous meditations that are going on around them. There is the Liberated Woman, who is not thereby precluded from being attractive or having a family (the historian Elaine Pagels, the philosopher Martha Nussbaum, and the novelist Louise Erdrich).

Finally, to complete the equation, we come to the audience, the

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viewers of public television. These are people caught up in careers and in "getting and spending," who are apt to feel that "the world is too much with us," and for whom it is reassuring to know that there are certain remote corners of the country where ideas are still discussed and taken seriously.

And yet along with this commendable sentiment, there is at work here a less lovely element, one that is only occasionally exposed, an oddly complacent, never fully articulated suspicion of unearned superiority. For to watch Moyers and his guests is to join effortlessly in a process of wrinkling one's nose at the supposedly meretricious glitz of mainstream American life.

It is this ability of Bill Moyers to persuade his millions of viewers of their essential apartness from the workaday pursuits and preoccupations of their own society that, surely, is the secret of his success. He has squared the circle and brought into being a miracle: elitism for the masses.

Republican Virtues

FREE PERSONS AND THE COMMON GOOD. By MICHAEL NOVAK. *Madison Books. 233 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by TERRY EASTLAND

THE question this book addresses is profound: can a free society have a common good? Michael Novak maintains not simply that the two are not incompatible but that, properly understood, they fit together naturally. To sustain this thesis, Novak draws on ancient and modern teachings, both secular and religious, and offers a broad range of theoretical arguments. Unfortunately, he does not always present his ideas in the most accessible way or according to an obvious logical sequence. Yet Novak has important things to say, and no one else has said them in quite the same way. If care and patience are required in reading *Free Persons and the Common Good*, those virtues are repaid.

Novak begins by observing that the concept of the common good is "of premodern origin." For Aristotle, the common good was what all things aim at, "the fulfillment toward which human society tends." It had primacy over persons. Novak rejects this idea of the common good because for him persons should have primacy. While he respects the liberal tradition that argues from human rights, he himself argues from Jewish and Christian traditions. "What in recent centuries we have come to call 'human rights,'" he writes, "have in Jewish and Christian vision a short, direct justification." This is "the dignity of the human person," which is "fitting, just, and preordained by the Creator."

For Novak, embracing the dignity of free persons does not mean that the concept of the common good must be jettisoned. It means, rather, that this concept must be revised. And here liberalism, in the classical sense, has proved essential. Liberalism has provided the kind of institutions most suitable to the "person-*qua*-person," as Novak puts it. And in doing so it has achieved a "practical reconciliation of the common good with the free person."

For Novak, liberalism in this sense has been best embodied in the American experiment, which "made central to the conception of the common good the protection of individual rights." The American Founders did not try to impose a "moral-cultural system" from the top down, but left the construction of such a system to institutions wholly distinct from government (the press, churches, universities, and the like). And they also legitimated "a new type of economic system," promoted and regulated by the political system but "free to a degree unprecedented in history from the domination of the state."

It is here that Novak discerns a revised understanding of the common good, namely, that "the chief and most potent instrument of achieving the common good is not the state but the society at large," and not the solitary individual but "the communitarian individual"—the individual in his various associations.

The communitarian individual nonetheless proceeds from "self-interest" and he may organize with others into a "faction." For Novak, these are hardly negatives; to the contrary, they are part of the liberal design. Novak draws on Madison's famous discussion in *The Federalist Papers* to show how self-interest and faction can be made to serve the public good. And he turns to Tocqueville for confirmation that the American experiment does in fact work. It was Tocqueville who coined the phrase, "self-interest rightly understood," which for Novak captures the "general principle of American life." According to this principle, man "serves himself in serving his fellow creatures and . . . his private interest is to do good."

To be sure, Novak is not naive. He admits that self-interest can be wrongly understood and destructive to the common good. It is only self-interest rightly understood, he says, that promotes the public

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good. And in doing so it draws men into "good habits," which in turn strengthen the social order.

And what kind of common good can be achieved? It is the common good of a particular community at a particular moment, not *the* common good for all times and places. And this kind of common good does not result from common intentions, aims, and purposes. Rather, its essence "consists in mutual cooperation apart from common intentions, aims, and purposes."

THERE is much to praise about *Free Persons and the Common Good.* Few who celebrate the liberal tradition also recognize so explicitly as Novak does the relevance of Judaism and Christianity in stressing the importance of the individual person. Yet surely Novak is right to insist, borrowing from his mentor Jacques Maritain, that "the long centuries of Jewish and Christian teaching about the dignity of the human person" have worked "like yeast in the dumb dough of history," finding "completion in institutions worthy of that dignity."

Further, Novak deserves credit for doing what so many liberals so often fail to do: he discusses liberalism not in terms of the individual but as a social system. Novak correctly recognizes that while liberalism has unleashed upon the world the enterprise of individual men and women, it is in its social effects that liberalism has racked up a remarkable record, particularly but not exclusively in the economic realm. At a moment when socialism is in deserved decline worldwide, a book like *Free Persons and the Common Good* is especially welcome.

At the same time, those who wish to adopt such classically liberal political systems for their countries will learn from Novak that it is more difficult than it might appear. It is one thing to structure a liberal government, perhaps borrowing elements from the American model. But it is quite another, and much harder, task to develop the kind of citizenry fit for a democratic regime. Novak's book is a useful reminder of the need for "republican virtues" in a people who would aspire to a liberal political order. As he explains, these include such virtues as enterprise and responsibility for self.

Finally, the logic of Novak's main thesis—that the concept of free persons goes hand in hand with the kind of understanding of the common good discernible in the American Experiment—seems unassailable. If free persons do have primacy, then the common good can only be something that emerges from acts taken as free persons. And their freedoms must be protected by institutions that limit state power. Necessarily, the market in such a society is a substantially free one.

AT THE level of theory, then, *Free Persons and the Common Good* makes a powerful case. Even so, there is a basic problem Novak should have addressed in greater detail. He warns that there are "forms of thought, feeling, and action inimical to freedom," among them "drugs, fanaticism, violence, and aberrations of passion." There is "the threat of darkness from within every human heart," and modern liberals, Novak says, have paid too little attention to it. But why? Novak thinks that it is because of complacency. I think the reason goes much deeper.

The fact is that too many advocates of liberalism today understand it in such a way as effectively to sanction even those forms of human behavior that Novak himself sees as "inimical to freedom." Their view of liberty has proved influential in the education of young people and in numerous judicial decisions. Indeed, the influence of this view makes Novak's definition of liberty sound painfully quaint, and until the battle against it is fought, and won, the force of a book like *Free Persons and the Common Good* will be lost on many in positions of power.

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